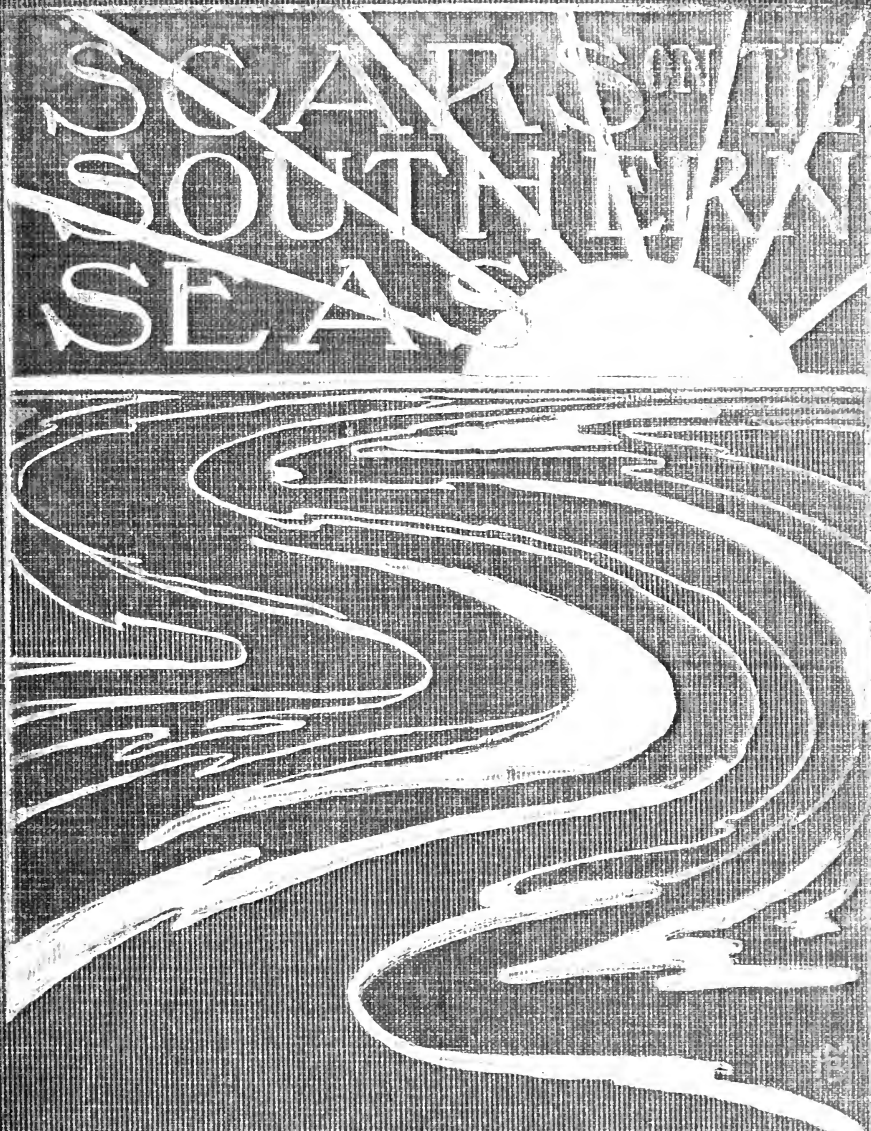
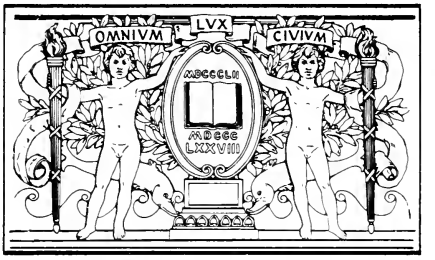
SCARS ON THE SOUTHERN SEAS



GEORGE BRONSON HOWARD

An excellent tale.



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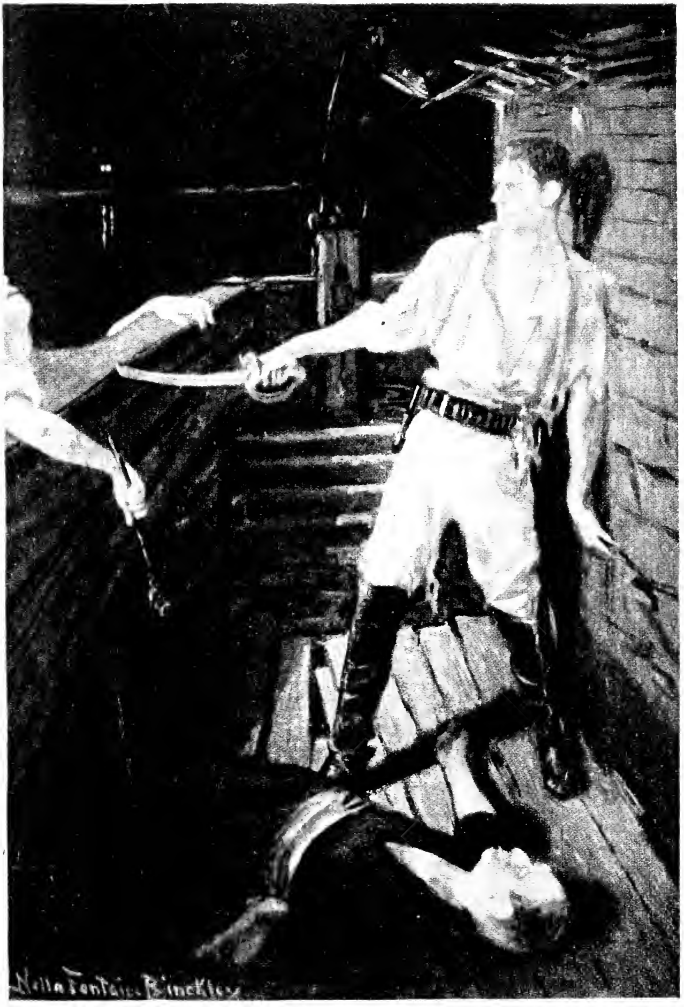

BRENT AT BAY

SCARS ON THE SOUTHERN SEAS

A Romance

BY

GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD
Author of
"Norroy, Diplomatic Agent," etc.

"Is Justice blind that she cannot find
A flaw in your nerveless ease?
Ye who called us forth from the honest North
To these scars on the Southern Seas"

NEW YORK
B. W. DODGE & COMPANY
1907

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Dedicated

TO

MY FRIEND

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

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Scars on the Southern Seas

CHAPTER I

ADVENTURERS-TO-BE

THE words "worth while" were by way of closely approximating a platform with Miss Dorothy Gordon. She made no attempt to explain them, giving them forth as self-evident reasons when her relatives became analytical as to the men she knew. She had much intuition, even more than has the average woman, especially as applied to the recognition of the unusual in the proposing sex. That surface indications affected her estimate little was amply proven by the contrasting exteriors of the men she liked well enough to desire better acquaintance.

"But who *are* these people, Dorothy dear?" asked Mrs. Carroll Lee-Brooks, her eyes appealing pathetically to the portholes above. Mrs. Lee-Brooks was Dorothy's aunt; and had not in the forty years of her life, met many people whose antecedents were unknown to her. In the placid social circles of her semi-Southern home-town one's caste was properly heralded;

and while some men might differ from her cameo-like conception of what they should be, she had the comfortable consciousness that they were "nice," if a bit "queer." Ask Mrs. Lee-Brooks the name borne by the paternal grandfather of almost any of the thousand or more of her male acquaintances, and the correct answer came without hesitation.

She had watched a Lee-Brooks squander her *dot,* perfectly secure and almost satisfied in the fact that his drunkenness would always be gentlemanly; and had worn black for three years in memory of a married life that had held nothing save pitiful economy and a few carelessly kind words from a husband famed only for his elegant idleness and graceful gallantries to each year's fresh crop of *débutantes.* But he had been a Lee-Brooks and his mother a Carter-Pinkney; and the King proclaims the rightness of all things by his actions.

Consistently, therefore, Aunt Katherine objected to the number of new acquaintances ("nobodies!") collected by her niece since the Pacific Mail Steamship *Sultana* had cleared from San Francisco. An unexpected inheritance from a recluse relative had left Miss Gordon free to whimsey as she would, and a leisurely tour of the globe, with her aunt as companion, had been one of the first results.

"There are only four really 'worth while,'" proclaimed Miss Gordon, "and they are far (I

repeat *that,* Aunt Kathy, for emphasis)—far (I add an adverb)—*very* far from being 'nobodies.' Third emphasis gained by saying again, very, *very* far, Aunt Kathy, dear."

"Oh, the Winthrop-Wadsworths!" sighed Mrs. Lee-Brooks. "They are *very* nice. Mrs. Wadsworth was a——"

"Bother the Winthrop-Wadsworths!" said Dorothy, sweetly. "Winnie Wadsworth is a pill—p-i-l-l. *That,* Auntie dear is slang. It is also unladylike. I impale it for your inspection, just as though I were an entomologist. They didn't say such things when you were a girl, Aunt Kathy. I *know* they didn't. They wore little starched pantalettes and screwed up their mouths to say 'prunes' and 'prisms.' They were far nicer than I am."

Dorothy was aware of the fact that nothing of this sort even slightly impressed itself upon Mrs. Carroll Lee-Brooks. She had been a Brayley and the Brayleys prided themselves on their total inability to see a joke or distinguish a tune.

"Mrs. Wadsworth was an Egerton," went on Mrs. Lee-Brooks, calmly taking up her thread where interrupted, "and Mrs. Wadsworth's grandmother was a Drexel. One of your great-great-aunts, Dorothy dear, married a Drexel and——"

"Lived happily ever after." The girl bent to straighten the bow of one of her tan pumps.

"Of course. Naturally. Wasn't he a Drexel? How could great-great auntie help herself? It would have been distinct bad form not to be happy. Well, I don't like the Wadsworths, so there! Winnie is a detestable little Gibson man, and he *will* tell me who were in his class at Harvard. As if I cared. He reads the *Review of Reviews,* and the *Outlook,* and the *New York Evening Post,* and quotes ponderously from them on all questions. He——"

"Mr. Wadsworth's sister married the Duke of Buchanan," interpolated Mrs. Lee-Brooks, taking up her genealogical thread again.

Dorothy shrugged her shoulders helplessly. "I don't like the Wadsworths, nor old Mr. Lascelles, nor little Freddy Gore, nor——"

"You have mentioned nearly all the passengers with whom I care to associate," said Mrs. Lee-Brooks, primly. "I know very little about any of the others——"

"The only four people aboard who are *worth while,*" Dorothy said, gently, "are Mr. Ochs, Mr. Brent, Mr. Dreen and Dr. Hyman. The others——" She waved her hand, dismissing the thought.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Lee-Brooks with severity, "that *Hyman* man is a *Jew!*"

Dorothy laughed.

"So was the founder of the Christian faith. But, Jew or not, Aunt Kathy, Dr. Hyman is one of the big surgeons of the world—and if you

don't remember how he operated on that millionaire's daughter, Lubbock's, and performed an operation successfully—an operation that the greatest specialists in Europe wouldn't touch, why, then you *ought* to."

"I don't remember. Such things don't interest me, dear." And, as an afterthought: "I've never *heard* of the man, and if——"

"Never mind, Aunt Kathy. He's a great surgeon. And if the fact will interest you, I might mention he's on a special inspection tour—at the request of the President—to make a report on the hospitals in the Philippines."

"Really, Dorothy, I take no interest in the man."

But Dorothy was quite as faithful in biographical work as was her aunt in genealogies. "As for Mr. Ochs—Mr. J. Pursey Ochs——"

"Gracious! *what* a name, dear!"

"He is one of the best-known newspaper editors in the country. He's going to the Philippines, too, to investigate things, and——"

"A man with a name like *that!*"

"And Mr. Dreen—if you were as much interested in football as I used to be, you'll remember the man who made the final touchdown for Yale in 1900. And Mr. Brent——"

"*Mr. Brent* is different," conceded Aunt Kathy, gracefully. "He is—I think he is one of the Virginia Brents. *They* are very nice people, the Brents——"

Dorothy laughed again. "Well, if he told you that, it's more than he's told me. I never knew a man so absolutely passive in his wall of reserve. He can talk for hours without giving one clue to his identity or past life. He——"

"He *is* a bit queer," admitted Mrs. Lee-Brooks, "but he seemed very much interested in what I told him about the Daughters of the Revolution. And if he is one of the Virginia Brents, he is *quite* nice. All the Brents are."

"I wish he'd give me a chance to find out," complained Dorothy Gordon, "but his conversation lacks that fascinating topic preferred by most men—himself." She yawned and stretched her arms. "I think I'll go on deck and get some beef-tea."

It was something after ten o'clock, and the custom of shipboard was, at that hour, to send the Chinese "boys" around with bowls of bouillon and plates of water-biscuits to sustain the passengers until "tiffin"—the midday meal. Dorothy made her way to the saloon-deck and sipped her beef-tea daintily.

She was a slim, graceful girl, this Dorothy Gordon, maybe four seasons out, and so essentially feminine was she that she was able to do mannish things without diminution of sex-charm. Her attraction was indefinite for this very reason, but very well defined in the power of it, drawing men of all sorts as she did. Her features were too irregular to give her the name

of a beauty, but there was much charm in her unconscious grace of movement, more in the quantity and color of her hair, the pale gold of winnowed wheat under an early morning sun. Inviting lips she had, too, not cherry-red in a buxom fashion, but rather the pale crimson of a Japanese rose; sensitive lips and never still, they spoke of highly-strung nerves, intense incapability of inaction. Her eyes, ever-changeable, reflecting sometimes the light of blue and the dark of violet, seemed to promise, challenge and understand.

"Morning, Diana," said a lazy voice near her.

In some fashion Brent had gotten hearing of her exploits in the hunting-field, and had bestowed the name of the hunt-goddess upon her. Brent was of the sort that seem to take women carelessly, and from whom women permit freedom of speech. What in other men might have been rudeness, impertinence, insolence, was only in line with the acceptation of Brent; for one instinctively knew that the man must be taken as he stood or not taken at all.

"I didn't see you at breakfast, Mr. Brent," she remarked.

He pretended to conceal a yawn with his hand. "They brought me some eggs and coffee," he said, "and now I am trying to get even by eating two bowls of bouillon. This is my fifth cracker."

"You've been to breakfast just three times

since we left San Francisco. And one of the three was when you *had* to get up for the Honolulu quarantine."

Brent permitted himself a slow smile. "Thanks for noticing," he said. "It's so seldom you compliment——"

"Well—?" She turned a trifle pink, then laughed without affectation. "Cornered, my friend?" she said.

"What I like about you—among other things," remarked Brent in a slightly more animated tone, "is your lack of little coquetries. Most girls would have answered me with something to the effect that there was so little to do on shipboard or some stuff of that sort."

"That's a bit mechanical and obvious," she replied. "I'm trying to cultivate the unwomanly reputation of being sincere."

"If you acquire it you'll make it womanly," was Brent's comment. "You're too little and fragile and spirituelle, and your eyes are so round and babyfied and your mouth always looks as though you were going to say 'oooo-oh' —so you couldn't be anything but womanly, or say 'girly,' if you tried."

She looked up at him from under her eyelids. "My unfortunate sex!" she sighed. "I wish I were a man."

"You're a little liar," said Brent, quite cheerfully. "You don't wish anything of the sort.

You have too good a time as a girl. You see you can't be sincere after all."

"Forgive us our occasional trespasses," she laughed. "You see I've generations of training to overcome."

"If I thought you could overcome it I'd advise you not to try," was Brent's response. "With all thy faults I—well, you know the rest of the quotation. Possibly I love the faults as much as the virtues, and——"

"Going ashore with me at Nagasaki?" broke in a buoyantly healthy young voice. "Go on, say you will, Miss Dorothy—and I'll take your aunt——"

"That's right, Dreen," was Brent's suave interpellation, as he turned to face a tall, large-framed, handsome youth, who had lifted a white yachting cap from his mop of auburn curls. Dreen's nose was Grecian in its chiseling, his mouth much too small and his eyes large and brown. His head and his features were those of a smaller man and contrasted oddly with his broad shoulders and huge frame.

"That's right, Dreen," repeated Brent. "You take Mrs. Lee-Brooks. I'm to take Miss Dorothy. You've solved the problem quite nicely."

The two men stared at one another. Brent had an incurious, uninterested glance. Dreen's eyes betokened anger. He turned to Dorothy.

"I think that will be—fine," she said slowly, tempted the meanwhile to inform Hopworth

Dreen that she had no engagement with Brent. Sometimes the masterfulness of the nonchalante irritated her. He seemed to take it for granted that things should be always as he desired them.

"All right," said Dreen, sulkily. "The purser says we'll be there about tiffin-time. I'll see you then." He strode off, jamming his hands hard into his coat-pockets, and joined the party in the smoke-room, the same consisting of Mr. Ochs and Dr. Hyman, who were sitting with their feet propped up on a cushioned seat, while Mr. Ochs related some tale which seemed to afford the little Jewish surgeon intense amusement.

"Oily beggar!" muttered Hopworth K. Dreen, referring to Brent. "Some women have such a hell of a taste"—referring to Miss Gordon's partiality. "Huh!" He finished with a grunt which struck a note of bitter scorn.

Pursey Ochs desisted from his narration and turned a questioning eye upon him, clicking his tongue against the butt of his cigar and getting it in a corner of his mouth. He was never known to touch a cigar with his fingers after once putting the weed between his teeth. He closed the eye on the cigar side to keep out the ascending smoke, and looked at Hopworth K. Dreen with the other.

"What say?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Dreen, sulkily. He picked up a book which Ochs had laid face down-

ward on one of the little card-tables, and turned the pages, not glancing at them.

The surgeon and the newspaper-editor were an odd-looking pair. Hyman was thin almost to emaciation, and his head seemed but a continuation of his forehead, for the hair grew only at sides and back. His features were youthful and his eyes brilliant. Pursey Ochs was stout, and had an abundance of crisp brown hair, which showed no signs of ever having been touched with a comb. His eyes seemed continually amused, antitheses of Hyman's, which were solemn. Hyman was attired with professional neatness, prime, precise in his manner. Ochs appeared to have put on his clothes in the dark. He wore continually a mauve vest, very wrinkled, cut low, and exposing a soft shirt that did not fit. He disguised his loose collar by tying a huge Windsor tie in an enormous bow. His manner was genially abusive.

Some men edit newspawers. Others make the newspapers echoes of their personalities. Such a newspaper was *The Daily Star* of St. Louis, presided over by Pursey Ochs. He had lately become a national figure by using its pages to hurl verbal vitriol at a Republican Presidential candidate. As *The Daily Star* was a Republican paper, there was much indignant discussion, out of which Pursey emerged smiling and famous. It pleased Pursey Ochs to be denounced. He was an iconoclast, and happy only when in

the process of smashing something. In age but little past thirty, he had won his way up from the ranks by sheer force of ability and an abundant supply of self-assertion and personal magnetism. He was, as has been before stated, stout. He acknowledged this, but denied indignantly that he was fat.

Finding Dreen preoccupied, Ochs turned again to Hyman and continued his story:

"And so this gentleman came up to the office to see me. He was full of beer and bad intentions. He had a gun reposing in his breast and a black-snake whip in his hand, the which he cracked at the office-boy. Says the office-boy to him, 'Mr. Ochs ain't in.' Says the gentleman to the office-boy, 'Don't lie to me, you pug-nosed Irish potato,' says he; 'I know he is in, and when I find him I'm going to cut him into ribbons with this here whip I got.' On hearing these cheering words I guess you think I strode out into that ante-room and boldly bade that bad man defiance—eh? You guess wrong, Doc. I climbed into my spike-tail, turned my cuffs to the clean side and shinned down the fire-escape. That's what I did. And they *do* say that the gentleman beat up the assistant city editor, under the impression that *he* was J. P. Ochs. Either that, or the assistant city editor went on a bat and fell into a tar-barrel. Only those two things would explain his blackened condition—"

"Say," broke in Hopworth Dreen, with his

customary consideration for the conversation of others. "This book any good, Pursey?"

He held up the volume he had been examining. Ochs smiled genially upon him, and clicked his cigar around to the other side of his mouth.

"I was coming to that," said he. "I'd have been there if you'd given me another minute. Oh, *that* effusion! Well, *you* might like it, Kosciusko."

Dreen closed the book and eyed Ochs. "What did you call me?" he asked.

"Kosciusko. Hopworth Kosciusko Dreen. That's your name, ain't it?" Ochs winked mysteriously at Dr. Hyman, who was taken with a sudden gust of laughter.

"I don't care whose name it is," was Dreen's sullen response. "I don't like it, so you cut it out, understand? I don't like it!"

He glared.

"I can understand that," agreed Ochs with cheerful sympathy. "Like my own case. I cherish a similar dislike to the name of Pursey —especially as you pronounced it, P-e-r-c-y, to rhyme with 'mercy.' It's not *that,* you know. Several times, my boy, I have endeavored to express this disinclination in small gentlemanly hints, but——"

"Well, that's the name the newspapers give you, anyhow."

"Too true. But my name is J. P. Ochs by the same course of reasoning as yours is Hopworth

K. Dreen. A man should be known by his John Hancock—that's mine. I have been striving for thirty years or more to amend the sad mistake of my parents. They must have been in a state of joyous aberration when they christened me. Jacob Pursey Ochs—tasty little handle, ain't it? I have declared against both given names. Also against being called 'Oaks.' The name is of the bovine species, male. Think of 'ox-tail soup' and dub me accordingly. Else I refer to you by the cognomen of the Polish patriot. We all carry burdens. What did you ask me about this book?"

"I asked you if it was any good." He exposed the cover to Ochs' view. "'The Wild Places.' You've been reading it, haven't you?"

"I have *so*," replied Ochs, "to the extent of boring myself considerably. It's the story of some New York silk-stocking's being suddenly dumped off in a little corner of Nowhere, and left in the chicken's position—scratch for your grub or do a disappearing specialty. It's the story of the triumph of muscle over brains. It's puerile piffle, if you ask me, my boy."

Brent, entering at that moment in search of a match for his unlighted cigarette, smiled, his nostrils quivering upward derisively. There were few things which made Pursey Ochs forget he was an impartial critic. Brent's smile was among the honored few.

Affecting to ignore the addition of Brent to

the party, Ochs continued, becoming very earnest. "*Why* does it bore me—this claptrap?" He touched the book in question with a stubby forefinger. "Because it tells of a condition of things that doesn't exist, and if it *did* exist wouldn't interest me. Because we're living in a civilized age, in which melodrama is relegated to the back-stairs. Therefore the story doesn't touch vitally on our lives. Besides, it lacks literary style. It's crudely written. It—if it isn't too much trouble, Brent, my boy, would you mind letting me into the gentle jape that gives you so much mirth?"

For Brent, lazily contemplating his cigarette, had smiled again.

"I was remembering," he answered softly, "that the critic of the *New York Times* review referred to the yarn as a triumph of naturalness."

Ochs winked his eyes rapidly and cleared his throat. "I—ah—see. The critic of the *Times*, eh? Well, that's nice, isn't it? The critic of the *Times!* Dear me! I wouldn't presume to match my poor opinion against such a giant intellect. We will then leave out the question of the book's literary value. I repeat my former statement, nevertheless, that it has no vital interest for one living in this age. I take no interest in stories of brute force. It doesn't bear upon the life in which I'm thrown. I stand in no danger of preserving my life with my fists.

If I want somebody beaten up, I can hire some burly roustabout to do it for me—persuaded by means of an infinitesimal portion of my weekly wage. What is physical strength to a man of this age, a man in the professions or the higher trades? The civilized man gets away from brute strength: he doesn't want it. Then, too, the book is highly overdrawn, luridly colored——"

Brent smiled broadly, answering him.

"How do you know? You've confessed the conditions the writer pictures are foreign to you. Eh? Then what do you *know* about it being highly overdrawn? Nothing. You say it doesn't appeal to you. Naturally not, since you're ignorant of its truth. But there are thousands of men who *have* lived in the wilds. They *know*. *You've* never been outside the little hypocrisies of civilization. What do you know of *real men,* men stripped of all the gaudy trappings of the city-worlds? Nothing. You've lived where there are no primitive passions, and your estimate of what men would do is founded on the repressed code, the fear of being considered melodramatic." He tapped the book with his lean white fingers. "A few months in *that* atmosphere would do you a whole lot of good, Ochs."

Brent tossed away his cigarette end and sauntered out to the deck quite as lazily as he had entered. They watched him as he bowed urbanely

to an elderly dowager and joined Dorothy Gordon by the rail. Pursey Ochs drew a long breath, then whistled piercingly.

"Well! the corrosive sublimated nerve of him!" he ejaculated with something like admiration. "If a large-boned, rough-speeched, heavy-fisted man with hair on him had said all that to me I'd have listened with some respect. But *that*——" His eyes were fixed on Dreen's back. "Why, he's a regular silk-stocking! Effete Easterner's too mild for him."

Considering Brent from a cursory standpoint, one was inclined to verify the opinion of the editor of the *Daily Star*. Brent was slim, his hands and feet were small, his waist hardly more than twenty-seven inches. He had the earmarks of the supercivilized, the over-nice. So minutely shaven was he that his round, full, olive-tinted face had the appearance of being without hirsute growth. His head was faultlessly barbered, and his light brown hair, combed back from his forehead and brushed flat on his head, was glossy from much attention. His eyes were, during most of the time, half-covered by the lids, his eyelashes seemingly touching his cheek, and imparting an air of lazy indifference. His lips were generally half-parted in his incurious smile, and gave the impression of a loose jaw and a chin indeterminate. Yet there were rare times when the lips came firmly together, the jawbones exhibited unusual

prominence, and the chin jutted out stubbornly. At such times there was a disquieting glint in his grey eyes.

He was in white flannels, which seemed moulded upon him. They were free from creases and exhibited the military curve of his back. His pipe-clayed canvas shoes were immaculate, as was his linen. Observers had been wont to say that Brent had been born with a collar on, so closely did that article hug his thin neck, and the perfection of the knot and fold of his four-in-hand tie were the envious mystery of the dandies of many clubs.

Under average conditions the observer would adjudge him a fop, without any particular strength of character, whose chief claim to distinction was his ability to go through the figures of a cotillion with grace and ease. Miss Dorothy Gordon, however, was not one of the casual ones. To her Brent was a mystery, and her regard for him was not unmixed with a pleasurable sense of fear. For she had seen him in one of the moods when the eyes glinted and the chin jutted.

A Chinese boy broke into the meditations of the three men in the smoking-room with the information that they were drawing near to Nagasaki. They joined Brent and Miss Gordon on deck with the information.

"Thanks, Hyman," was Brent's response, exhibiting a pair of folding binoculars, "but we've

been viewing the port in question for fully five minutes. Miss Gordon and I are going to take in the sights after tiffin—and Dreen is going to take''—the pale flicker of his smile appeared again—''Miss Gordon's aunt. We'll be quite a jolly party.''

''Some day,'' remarked Hopworth K. Dreen vengefully, when he stood within the cabin, which he shared with Pursey Ochs, ''I am going to make that damn Brent smile on the other side of his face. The oily beggar!''

CHAPTER II

ENEMIES IN THE MAKING

"It's comic-opera land. I can't get over the feeling that if I go far enough I'll find the dressing-rooms where they rub off the make-up and change their costumes for bowler hats and sackclothes."

Dorothy furled her blue, lacy parasol, and sat down on a stone ledge, her eyes full of the gorgeous panorama stretched below her: white roads running through hills of tangled green and pink, the green of the trees and brush, the pink of the cherry-blossoms. Encircled by verdure-covered hills, the waters of Nagasaki harbor sent emerald hues to the sun, and the seagoing vessels anchored off the Bund were transformed into swans by the magic touch of distance and the enchantment of a Japanese springtime, when all the world seems to take on the color of the cherry-blossoms, prophesying futurities in rosy hues.

The temple behind them gleamed white in the sun rays, and the great gods who guarded the

many steps seemed to have beneficent smiles on their stony faces. Along the road below passed the bearers of burdens, yokes across shoulders, burdens resting on either end, the rickshaw-men, one in the shafts, one behind to push, toiled by in endless procession, their fares young University students in caps and gowns on their way to official devotion. Girls in gay kimonos clacked along on their wooden clogs, purring like so many kittens. Following the lines of the telegraph wires, the hills of Moji rose blue-black against the sky-line, sheltering the white-sanded bathing beach and the turquoise sea.

"I'm waiting for the orchestra to strike up," Dorothy said again. "It's all here, scenery, tea-house—that's a tea-house behind us, isn't it? —rickshaws down there, and there are our men over there smoking those funny little acorn pipes; chorus of village maidens; temples—but, let me see, something's missing. I know what it is. It's Geisha girls!"

Brent nodded toward the tea-house. "They've got 'em in there," he made remark. "For two yen they'll give us an exhibition. Want to see it?"

"N—o," demurred the girl. "I prefer to keep my illusions. I know they can't be as pretty as those I've seen in the musical plays, and they mightn't dance as well. Well, anyhow, we've got the entire comic-opera equipment,

even''—she showed some little even milk teeth —''to the young foreigner in white flannels and——''

''And the American ingenué in fluffy skirts,'' supplemented Brent, duplicating her smile.

''And now it's make way, make way, for the Lord High Executioner,'' she chanted. ''But the orchestra won't give the cue. And then our old friend, the Emperor—

'' 'My object most sublime, I will achieve in time;
To make the punishment fit the crime, the punishment fit the crime.
And cause each prisoner pent—unwillingly represent
A cause for innocent merriment, for innocent merriment.' ''

''Which, by the way,'' observed Brent, carelessly, ''is not entirely in a Gilbertian sense. The Emperor who found amusement in boiling his subjects in oil has some modern counterparts. You look on Japan as a pretty little story-book land, and you wander about like Carroll's 'Alice,' feeling the natural superiority that real people have for people in dreams. 'Why, you're only a pack of cards,' says Miss Alice. But these little people aren't of the Queen of Hearts variety. They don't shout 'off with her head' in public. They don't *shout*

it at all; but they *do* it in private. They are not nice people, these Japs, and they are the worst enemies we Americans have. They have soft-soaped us completely by aping our manners and customs. Calling themselves the Yankees of the East! Praise the United States to an American and you can steal his purse. As a nation we are singularly gullible."

She looked at him with questioning blue eyes.

"You're not very patriotic," she observed.

"Well," he admitted, with his usual lazy smile, "I don't have my clothes cut out of the American flag. I can see America's faults all the plainer because I regret them so much. And one of the worst things that ever happened to us was to have believed in Japan. These people are removed from us by color. They have no morals, as we know morals. They have no honor. As soon as they have recuperated fully from their war with Russia, they will begin active, aggressive measures against England and the United States. Even now they are stirring up the Chinese against us, and their officers are replacing the white mercenaries in the Chinese army. They are slow and smiling. You know what Kipling says:

" 'The Christian riles, and the Aryan smiles
And he weareth the Christian down.' "

"I believe the quotation ends with something about a tombstone white," she said.

"It does. To carry the symbolism further, that 'tombstone white' may some day be magnified into a colossal burying-ground: the *tombstone of whites.* Is that a pun? If it is, I'm sorry, but I really mean what I've said."

He kicked meditatively at a stone. Dorothy noted a light of interest in his eyes, the customary tolerant boredom had departed, and there was a flush about his rather high cheekbones.

"I tell you, Diana, we Americans will have reason to regret the day we ever built battleships for Japan and agitated her cause against Russia. Bad as Russia may be—it's a badly misrepresented country, by the way—Japan is worse, so far as our interests are concerned. She is a great machine, and like machines she has no heart, no soul, no honor. It is a land where women are men's chattels. There is in it none of the higher idealism. Because of its cherry-blossoms and its doll-faced women romancists have builded pretty tales which sentimentalists have devoured and diffused. But there is no sentiment in Japan, no romance. A Japanese is dangerous because he smiles even if he means to stab you when your back is turned. He calls you his friend while he hands you a poisoned draught. They hate us; but they smile—and wait. To-day their army is an almost invincible fighting machine, but they lack money; they are in debt. We Americans and

the English loaned them money. Some day they will not need to borrow money from us. Then——"

He broke off, smoothing his glossy hair with his thin hand. "Then the world will have to face Japan—and China. The Asiatics against Caucasians. But, meanwhile, Japan would like to have the Philippines, so that her island empire would guard the entire coast of Asia. Then——"

This time he stopped abruptly, as one who realizes an indiscretion, for Dorothy was gazing at him almost raptly, her expression seeming to tell him that she had something important that she must say. Intuitively Brent seemed to know what her remark was to be, and his exaggerated ease in taking out his cigarette case was not very well assumed.

"That's what Bauldwin Brent says," she exclaimed, then pulled herself short. "Bauldwin Brent!—*why,* Mr. Brent—is it you? Why—!"

Brent had the same lazy look in his grey eyes again, as he took the lighted cigarette from his mouth and held it, finically, between index and second fingers.

"But no!" There was disappointment in her tones. "It can't be. Bauldwin Brent must be thirty-five if he is a day, while you——"

"He is a relative of mine," Brent explained. "My first name is John. I'm free to confess

I've imbibed the theories I've given you from Bauldwin Brent."

"Yes, I know. I recognized them. That's what he said in 'The Morals of Japan.' Do you know, Mr. Brent, I was *very* silly? I thought for a moment that *you* were Bauldwin Brent. Wasn't it *ridiculous?*" She laughed.

Brent wrinkled his brows slightly, and a shadow of annoyance seemed to rest on him. She interpreted his displeasure, and made haste to apologize, although, it must be confessed, she was not sorry that once, at least, she had caused this languid individual to show human irritation.

"Of course, Mr. Brent, is isn't an invidious comparison. But you, and my conception of Bauldwin Brent, are so different. A man who has been through five wars, the owner of twenty foreign orders for gallantry, who has been an officer in three armies, who's been lost in the ice looking for the Pole—and has written four great books—naturally I couldn't conceive of him being anything like you. He must be big and strong, somewhat careless in his appearance, a man of tremendous energy and force, and a man who is never content to be idle. You, on the other hand—things don't interest you sufficiently. You always seem tired, and about the only thing on which you waste much thought is your personal appearance—of which, my dear Mr. Brent, you are quite deservedly proud."

She made him a mock curtsey. Brent blew a smoke-ring and watched her with his incurious smile.

"Do you know"—she clasped her hands about her knee, rocking herself to and fro on the rock-ledge—"I've always wanted to meet Bauldwin Brent. A girl gets tired of making heroes out of strutting romantic actors. But she *must* have heroes of some sort, and presently she discovers the Bauldwin Brent sort. I've read everything he's ever written, and I've got a scrap-book home pasted full of clippings about him. And the only thing that scares me is that when I meet him I may be disappointed."

"You will be," returned Brent, readily. "He's a very commonplace sort of a person when he's back in civilization."

"*Mr. Brent!*" she cried, indignantly. He shrugged his shoulders and put on his Panama hat, turning it up in the front with a practised hand.

"That's sheer green envy," she further commented, "and I don't believe you. But, tell me, haven't you got a picture of him? I'm just crazy to have one of his pictures. He won't have one taken for publication, they say, and the only thing I have is a wretched little snapshot that might be anybody. Have you got one of his pictures?" Her tone and her eyes were eager, and she leaned toward him, smiling ingratiatingly.

"Yes, I have," he smiled, "but it's in my trunk in the hold, and I can't get at it until the *Sultana* gets to Manila. But if you'll wait until then I'll give it to you."

"*Mr. Brent!*" She was all gratefulness; then swiftly apologized again. "You must excuse my shameful admiration of your relative—but —well, I suppose a woman without something to worship is lacking in femininity. And *that* would never do. And naturally my ideal is a man who *does* things! I don't really mean to say I would like to be a man, but I would like to be able to do some of the things they do, and——"

"I have heard you're the pluckiest little daredevil in Maryland when it comes to a cross-country chase," he remarked.

She shook her head. "That isn't pluck. It's emulation. I try to make up in recklessness what I lack in skill. I'm not even a good rider —that is, from a man's standpoint. But that isn't especially interesting. I——"

Her conversation halted, and she got up from her seat very deliberately. There was a dazed looked in her blue eyes, and she stared past Brent in a curious manner.

What's up? he wished to know, his attitude still one of lazy quiescence. He made it a point never to act until he knew what it was that he must do. He followed the direction of Dorothy's gaze, and turned in his usual indifferent

manner to face a handsome, dissipated-looking man in pongee clothes who was staring quite as fixedly at Dorothy as was she at him. Brent noted that, though the stranger could be scarcely more than thirty from his eyes and mouth, there were a few flecks of grey in his short black, curly hair. His face had the tan of the sea, he carried himself erectly and with the bearing of a well-bred man.

He took off his soft grass-straw hat at the sight of Brent, tucking it under his right arm in company with his bamboo stock.

"Pardon me?" was Brent's question as he raised his hat.

The other man came nearer. "Pardon *me*. Am I mistaken in supposing your companion to be Miss Dorothy Gordon of Baltimore?"

"You are not mistaken. This is Miss Gordon." Brent stood aside slightly, and Dorothy stepped toward the stranger.

"Dorothy!" he said, wonderingly.

"Harry!"

The man turned to Brent. "I'm from Baltimore, too," he explained. "My name is Lanier-Daingerfield. Henry Lanier-Daingerfield. I haven't seen Miss Dorothy for—two years."

There was a note in his voice which seemed to indicate that he had resisted the temptation to say "two whole years." Brent recognized it.

"I think," he said, "that I'll step over to the

tea-house and have them bring us some tea out here. Just look after Miss Gordon while I do it, Mr. Daingerfield."

He strolled away, swinging his slim malacca stick, master of this situation as he was of most. Daingerfield turned to the girl.

"Very decent chap," he remarked. "Lord, Dolly! you're as pretty as ever, and——"

He reached for the little gloved hand, but she withdrew it.

"Harry," she said, with dangerous sweetness, "don't make me sorry I didn't cut you when the rest of them did. I didn't, if you'll remember."

"Remember!" His eyes flashed sombrely. "I'll forget that walk down Charles street when I die maybe—not before. Lord; there wasn't a woman I knew would speak to me—not a one. And precious few of the men. That's how they keep official *secrets* in the Navy. Why, all Baltimore knew about it before I resigned." He laughed shortly. "I might as well have been chucked—broken; but Dorothy——"

He caught her hand, this time in spite of her elusion. "You used to care for me—before that! I've gone through a lot since. Not because of that—because I lost you——"

"You never *had* me," she said, her voice low, but her cheeks flaming. "It wasn't that—I didn't care for you. I was only a child then—just out! And you—you were a hero in my eyes. Harry, you mustn't, you really mustn't.

Please don't hold my wrist like that—you hurt me—and you have no right. You—yes, I used to let you kiss me, I know. I've not had an easy time forgetting that. I *let* you do it, I know. But—it was all a mistake—Harry! you *must* let me go or have a scene—because I'll struggle to get away if you don't."

He dropped her hands, and rested his face on his own. His eyes seemed hopeless when they encountered hers again, but he spoke, goading himself into a fierce energy:

"Dolly, I've tried to be decent since. I've tried—on my word, I've tried. But it's hard for a man to be decent who's been dropped by a government. People get on to it. I've had a hell of a time, Dolly, just that—a *hell* of a time. I'm at the turning of the ways now. I've got an offer to go into something that isn't decent, and I'm down and out and the chances are I'll take it. I'm to give an answer to-night, and—Dolly, I love you. Maybe I love you so much because it's so hopeless. It's the only decent part of me that's left—my love for you. Because, you see, I'm weak, and it's harder to be decent than—other things. But if you'll promise——"

"Nothing, Harry," she said, hardening her voice. "I'm sorry; I'm very sorry. But, no, that's final; *indeed* it is. And I'm awfully sorry, Harry."

"Dolly, Dolly!" His tone hurt her. "I—I

—don't; don't say that—don't. I thought it was all up with me until I saw you again—just now, and then all the old hopes and desires to be decent came back—with you. You, Dolly; you —Dowothy!"

He lisped when his emotions overcame him, a failing that had given him his nickname, "Lisp Lanier." And the lisp made the last despairing word pathetic.

"I'll work like a dog to be decent, and—be fit for you."

"It isn't a question of fitness, Harry," she said. "If I loved you I wouldn't care so much what you were. But I don't. I don't and I can't *make* myself love you. Believe me that I'm sorry—and be decent, because—because—well, because people ought to be decent—people of your breed and——"

Someone coughed. Both looked up to view a sallow, black-eyed Eurasian in white drill clothes and buckskin *zapatos,* who held in his hand a Philippine straw hat swathed with white crepe. He bowed elaborately.

"I ask pardon, *Señor*—and *Señorita."*

His black eyes looked undisguised admiration at Dorothy. She surveyed him, striving for the calm of which she had been robbed by Lanier-Daingerfield's words. The ex-naval officer scowled in the newcomer's direction.

"Miss Gordon,may I present Señor Bernardo Esperaso?" he said formally and with the air

of one who performs a necessary but disagreeable duty. Dorothy nodded coldly. The *mestizo* (for now it was plain he was a Spanish half-caste) came up, his soft hat pressed to his heart, his back arched.

"*Señorita,* the chance of meeting so char-rming a ladee. Ah, Dios!——"

"*Adios,*" said Daingerfield, smiling grimly at the play on words, "is more like what you should say to Miss Gordon, Señor Esperaso. We must go—immediately, immediately! Here comes your friend, Dorothy—and——"

As Brent came up the Spanish *mestizo* was presented, and Lanier-Daingerfield shook hands and gave the two Americans good-bye. Esperaso's insolent black eyes rested on Dorothy again.

"You—leef here, Miss Gordon?"

"I am going to Manila," she said, shortly, and turned away to Brent.

"On the *Sooltana,* by way of Hong-Kong. Ah!"—he clasped his hat to his heart again—"I too—I go by the *Sooltana.* We meet again, then, Mees Gordon—and you, Meestaire——"

Brent's eyes swept him in a cold scrutiny, and he and Dorothy watched the pair in silence as they descended the many steps to the road below, where waited the rickshaws.

"Does Mr. Lanier-Daingerfield sail on the *Sultana,* also?" he asked, flicking the dust from his trousers with his light stick.

"I—I don't know," she answered, startled. "I—I don't think so!"

"I suppose," he stated idly, and as though speaking of commonplaces, "you know that Henry Lanier-Daingerfield was once a United States naval officer; that while on the U. S. S. *Pasadena,* as executive officer, he was caught cheating at cards; that in the quarrel that followed he struck his superior officer, and was ironed and consequently courtmartialed. He was allowed to resign because he had powerful Senatorial influence. If it had been a man without a pull he would have been broken."

"I know all that," she said in a low tone.

"I mentioned it in case you didn't. A man who cheats at cards, and cheats brother-officers, is not the kind I introduce to women. And if further evidence is needed that he is rather a bad lot, the fact of his being in company with that half-caste would certainly count as such."

"How is it," she asked with quick resentment, "that you know so much about everybody?"

He spread the palms of his hands for her inspection. "A man must have some occupation. Mine is keeping track of people. I have a good many friends in the Navy; that accounts for my knowing about Mr. Daingerfield. As for Esperaso—well, I just happen to know—that's all." He nodded non-committally, and took her arm.

"Come," he said, "let's be getting back to our

rickshaws. It's nearly sundown, and your aunt will have *me* in her black books if I don't get you back in time to dress for dinner. I wonder," he speculated, with the ghost of a smile, "how Dreen got along with her? Don't I deserve credit for the neatness and dispatch with which I lost them, eh?"

"I don't know that I wanted to lose them," she remarked.

"Your reputation for being sincere is depreciating," he said, with gentle raillery. "That's coquetry."

"Is it?" She laughed as he helped her into the rickshaw. "Well, I suppose I wouldn't be a true woman if I weren't inconsistent. Chop-chop, coolie"—this to the rickshaw-man, to further prove her inconsistency, for to have gone "chop-chop" in that frail vehicle down the slope of hill stretching below them would have been suicidal.

The passage down precluded further conversation, for Brent's rickshaw was kept a considerable distance behind hers to obviate any chance of a collision. It was only when they reached the Bund, or waterfront, that the two came side by side again.

"You didn't tell me who Señor Esperaso was," she reminded him with feminine curiosity anent the unspoken word.

Brent took off his hat and stroked his hair, looking out toward the setting sun as it glinted

red-gold on Nagasaki Bay. He did not seem to hear her. Presently she repeated her question. He looked at her quizzically.

"He's a man you oughtn't to know," he remarked.

"So *you* say. Give *me* a chance to judge for myself."

"You'll take *my* word!" She had not known hitherto that there was so deep a note in his voice or that he could command so harshly. "In the first place he is a half-caste. That's enough."

"*Indeed,* Mr. Brent!"

"Indeed, Miss Gordon!"

She was suddenly overcome with just the same sensation when, as a little girl, the severe, spectacled governess had bade her hold her tongue. Recalling her meek tone later, she was filled with wrath and astonishment, but at the moment she had been very submissive.

"I believe you, Mr. Brent!"

The male of the human species is not, after all, a difficult being to handle. Implied submission from the female and she may ask as she chooses.

"I'll tell you," he said, quite mollified and smiling pleasantly. "Esperaso's presence in Japan bodes no good for the United States. He's one of the six who form the Philippine Junta in Hong-Kong, and their object in life is to get the Americans out of the Philippines.

There are two more half-castes in the Junta, a Jewish money-lender, a German smuggler and an effeminate cutthroat who's either English or American—but both nations disown him. If they've been getting aid from Japan and——"

The rickshaws pulled up at the Pacific Mail dock, where a number of *sampans* clustered. At the sight of the two Americans the Japanese boatmen set up shrill clamors, each protesting the worth of his own services and drowning the sound of Brent's voice. He paid the rickshaw-men their dole of *sen,* and helped Dorothy into the nearest *sampan.*

Indicating the *Sultana* for the boatman's instruction, he sat down beside the girl.

"What else?" she asked.

"Isn't that enough to damn him utterly?" he queried. "By the way, have you known this Daingerfield long?"

Although he had striven to eradicate from his tone any personal feeling, there was enough of it still there to set Dorothy's heart beating a trifle more swiftly than before. She looked up at him from under her long lashes; the eyes were violet now, and he could see the ebb and flow of color in her white cheeks. He stretched out his hand involuntarily until it almost touched hers, and when he became conscious of the purpose of his action Dorothy saw him exhibit for the first time the symptoms of embarrassment.

"Yes," she answered, for his steady gaze made perversion of the truth difficult. She coveted the regard of this man. That he should some day discover that she had lied was intolerable to her; that he was quite able to discover it smote her into helplessness. He seemed always to *know* things, to impress as one aloof merely because the game did not strike him as being worth the playing.

She looked away, then down, breathing quickly. "He was quite a hero to me in my first year. I met him at the first Monday german of the season. I was terribly silly—like most girls. You mayn't know, but he did something quite heroic during the Spanish-American war, and—well, I was always a little hero-worshipper—and I fancied myself in love with him. I saw him lots that season, then he was ordered to the Mediterranean, and I didn't see him again until two years ago, and by that time I knew how silly I'd been. Oh! it was before—before his disgrace. If I had loved him—that wouldn't have stopped me. I'd have cared, but I would have stuck to him. I'm afraid my morals are perverted, Mr. Brent."

"I'm glad you didn't throw him over on account of—of the disgrace," he said slowly. He took off his hat and twisted it into weird shapes, then smoothed his hair—that hair which never needed smoothing. "But—" and this was slower still, as though each word were thought

separately before being spoken; "but I'm glad you *did* throw him over."

Their eyes met. Both looked away. Her cheeks seemed hot and flushed. He put on his hat again, the wrong way.

"By the way"—there was again the old smiling droop of the mouth—"I forgot to come back with the tea I went to get, didn't I?"

She nodded, smiling brightly.

"That's strange," he confided to the setting sun. "I wonder how I came to forget that tea? Why, that's what I *went* for."

"It was very nice of you," she said, "but all the same I wish you hadn't."

"Misapprehension, Diana," he assured her. "Won't happen again. Hullo, here's the *Sultana.*"

"So it is," she said regretfully, as the *sampan* came alongside the accommodation ladder of the big liner.

CHAPTER III

THE PAGODA ON THE LAKE

THE silence between Lanier-Daingerfield and his *mestizo* companion had been unbroken when they entered their rickshaws, save for a few terse commands in Japanese which Esperaso addressed to the coolies. They were wheeled down the winding slopes still uncommunicative, Lanier-Daingerfield's chin flattening his collar, his attitude depressed. The half-caste smoked a cigar and narrowed his beady eyes. At the foot of the hill he raised his hand and pointed his finger at his companion.

"You show-string—he is untie."

Lanier looked up with a little jerk of his head, meeting Esperaso's scrutiny. He noted that the coolies had brought their vehicles to a dead stop.

"The right one," nodded the half-caste. Lanier reached down and knotted the offending footgear without care.

"What's the matter with these coolies?" he asked.

"I do not know what direction it is we take,"

Esperaso informed him. "You have been made an offer—a berth—*qui es?* I believe it excellent, *muy bueno*—is it not? But the answer, that you do not give."

He waved the cigar in the manner of one who has a grievance.

"They tell me you be here, the American *señor* who has had with his government—a difference, shall we say?" He showed his white teeth disagreeably. "Yet the *señor* is one grand offisaire, and to shoot the big guns—*Por Dios!*—he is the man. I come to the American *señor,* who leeve in what you call no great style in the small hotel. He is not with the cash—no *dinero.* I tell him I have the poseetion—what you call—berth on the beeg sheep—crusaire—*vapor* for the fight—you *sabe?* The money—it is much—five hundred *pesos*—five hundred *yen*—what you call two hundred and feefty dollars the month. The beeg moneys. You say you, the American *señor*—that you do not know, eh? Now, I must have the ansaire. All but you is arrange. To-night by eleven of the clock I sail for Hong-Kong. Before I go—the ansaire—and I will know weech way to tell the coolies to take."

"You said," the ex-naval officer's voice was strained, "that perhaps I would fight Americans—my own countrymen?"

"There is no perhaps," replied the Eurasian, sharply.

"You mean I *will?*"

"*Quien sabe, señor?* As it is arrange it may be ill fortune not to be. Then—no. As it will be if Fate is kind, *si señor.* Of you they say your country will have no more. To you is the disgrace. Can conduct change that? *Quien sabe,* again, *señor?* But I—I say it is no. I offaire you the opportuneety to become the first offisaire of a great sheep; perhaps some day, if Fate is kind, it may be an admiral's poseetion. There is also—loot! But more I will say not, *señor.* Already much time I have spent with you. The ansaire now, if you please."

Lanier-Daingerfield looked at him with dull eyes.

"I can't be much worse than I have been," he said slowly. "I can't suffer more. I may as well get the flesh-pots." He seemed to be arguing with a shadowy personage that the Eurasian did not see; shadowy, indeed—the vision of that youthful cadet, brave in his dress uniform, the valedictorian of his class, who spoke of love of country and desire to serve her. And when he looked again there was not even the shadow.

"I suppose I might as well."

Esperaso shook his head impatiently. "*Señor,* you dawdle. Is it——"

"Do you want me to shout it?" came the sullen response. "I said 'yes' once."

"I did not hear you, *señor.*"

"I said it just the same. I'll say it again if

you like—Yes, yes, yes! Does that satisfy you, damn you? Yes, yes, yes!"

Esperaso shrugged his shoulders. "The *señor* declaims?" he inquired politely. "My ears, they are trained to catch the whispaire. They need not the shout. My hand, Mistaire Lanier. We are what you call fellow-conspeerators now."

Lanier took the hand, glancing side-fashion at his companion. A few words to the coolies, and they were again on their way. Esperaso seemed to expect no further conversation from the ex-naval officer, and had he his expectations would not have been realized.

The rickshaws took a new course now, heading for the Moji road, through narrow streets gaudy with flaunting ideographic signs streaming in the wind. From the panorama of shops and Government buildings the tireless coolies soon passed to the hills again, and now, his stick pointing the way, Esperaso issued more orders. Through a grove of lichens they passed to the sight of a table-like elevation with neatly graveled walks encircling an artificial lake, some few city blocks in circumference, in the centre of which, raised upon a green spot or islet, a four-storied pagoda shot its spire toward the sky. The sight seemed to have upon the coolies a disquieting effect, for they started violently, nearly unseating their fares. Esperaso turned upon them with angry words. They murmured inco-

herent but vehement protests, backing away the meanwhile.

Scowling at the obdurate Nipponese, the Eurasian alighted from his tiny vehicle, motioning that Lanier-Daingerfield follow his example. He drew from the pockets of his pongee trousers some loose silver, which he tossed to the ground contemptuously. The coolies dropped the shafts of their rickshaws, scrambling for the coin with anxious cupidity, while Esperaso walked toward the confines of the lake and descended a pair of stone steps to where was moored a *sampan,* gaudy in red and green streamers, and presided over by a boatman in skin-tight green breeches and tunic, the breast of which was embroidered with red ideographs. Esperaso lifted his forefinger, his eyes on the boatman, and carefully traced in air some sign which seemed to have meaning, for the man nodded his head humbly.

"Be pleased to enter, *señor,*" said Esperaso, beckoning to Lanier, who had not descended. Both foreigners having embarked, the boatman retreated to the stern, working his sweep for the double purpose of propelling and steering the *sampan* to the landing place of the little islet.

They were put ashore at a duplicate set of steps to the ones on the other side, and the ex-naval officer, guided through a clump of dwarf yews, came to the entrance of the gayly tiled pagoda.

"What're you doing?" he growled, bitterly ironical. "I don't want to go into any temple. I don't have to become a Buddhist just because I've joined your crowd, do I?"

Which was for lack of something relevant to say.

"It is not a place of worship, *señor,*" was Esperaso's calm reply. "Once it was. But now—it is sometheeing not that at all. See, the sun has set, *señor.*"

The afterglow sent red streaks athwart the horizon. Yes, the sun *had* set. Somehow it seemed an omen, and Lanier shuddered involuntarily.

There was no door to bar entrance to the building. They entered a circular room with a dome-like roof resting on columns of marble—a room quite empty. Ascending to the second landing, Lanier heard the low hum of conversation from the barred, slit-like windows. Esperaso avoided the main stairway, veering to the left and knocking, in some sort of arranged code of raps, upon a teak door, narrow, with iron hasps worked in strange arabesques. The door flew back, behind it a Japanese in much the same costume as that worn by the boatman. Upon their entrance it was closed with the same quiet quickness that marked its opening. A winding staircase, only wide enough to accommodate one person at a time, was disclosed in the light emanating from within the enameled

shape of a Japanese dragon-lamp, set in a niche.

"We go now to what was once the cell to hold what they call the Shinto god. Now there is no god—only a straange man, veree straange man."

Esperaso was on the landing at the head of the steps and knocked in the same code he had used before. There was a click of a latch, indicating that the device of European apartment houses had been adopted. The Eurasian pushed by the door and entered.

The room was cell-like in its formation—stone walls, interstices for windows, flagged floor. It was lighted in the same manner as was the stairway, by electric bulbs within dragon-lamps of beaten glass, green and red colors predominating. There was much to suggest the library of a disciple of the *art nouveau* in the furnishings—kakemonos, dragon-rugs, a sectional bookcase in black wood behind the glass windows of which glittered silver and gilt bindings, screens representing cranes and yew-trees and geishas, heavy wonderfully-carved chairs of teak, some tabourets of the same material, and directly in the centre of the room a huge table, littered with maps, text-books of military school, papers and drawing materials. The nickel fittings of a desk telephone glinted, and beside it stood a connected Morse telegraph instrument in a rosewood box. There were a number of insulated green wires running into

the flagged floor, and a row of ivory push-buttons were close to the hand of the man who sat in the carved chair by the table, a man who wore a black silk mask, which hid the major portion of his forehead and nose, and through which a pair of sinister black eyes looked sideways in the direction of the newcomers.

"I have succeeded, Excellency." Esperaso's tone had suddenly grown cringing.

"You were long in the consummation." There was no expression in the tones and the spoken English was without an acccent. Only the peculiar, stilted phrasing indicated the fact that the speaker was not born in the domains of the Anglo-Saxon races. But other than that he was indubitably foreign, one might not correctly hazard a surmise as to his nationality by any exterior signs. He was in a black frock coat, black trousers and spats, and varnished shoes; he wore a huge black Ascot tie pinned with a pearl, a high straight collar and a high-cut waistcoat. His hands were in black gloves, his head was covered by a black skull-cap, which entirely hid his hair. Instinctively, Lanier-Daingerfield believed him to be Japanese, but the color of the lower part of his face was no browner than Lanier's own.

"You will take that"—the man with the domino nodded to a chair near the desk and at Lanier. "You"—and this time bobbed curtly to Esperaso—"will sit where you please. Now,

you will listen, Mr. Lanier, to what you have entered upon. We did not imagine that we would need you. There was another man who was to have had your place. He drank too much in the bar of the Nagasaki hotel, and now—he is dead of apoplexy. The inference is what you wish——"

He toyed with his drooping mustachios, the black eyes never leaving Lanier's face.

"You are known here as Henry Lanier. Your name is Henry Lanier-Daingerfield. Graduate of the United States Naval Academy. Advanced two points in grade for meritorious bravery during the Spanish-American war. Courtmartialed for cheating at cards and assaulting your superior officer. Found guilty, but allowed to resign. Served in Brazilian Navy as captain of the cruiser *Corpus Christi* until record in the American Navy discovered. Commanded rebel gunboat during a Venezuelan insurrection. Commanded a Consolidated Fruit Company steamer, smuggling arms to Panama. Came to the Orient to enter the Chinese Navy, but was debarred by record. Made application to enter the Japanese Navy as a gunnery expert. Application denied. Your life in epitome, Mr.—er—Lanier or Daingerfield?"

"Lanier, please. Yes, you've got it pretty straight, except for the Brazilian Navy. I left that because I wasn't paid. They don't care

much about records in the banana republics. And now—what's the game?"

"You surmise?"

"Something illicit. Esperaso said I would fight my own countrymen. I suppose it's smuggling arms into the Philippines. Is that it?"

"In a way"—a thin smile. "Yes, in a way, a very large way. You object?"

"What the hell should I care?" answered Lanier with sudden roughness. "I'm in this for the loot. I'm broke (you know that, too, I suppose) and I'm tired of *being* broke. It's bad enough to lose your reputation and your friends without being broke. What do I care now? Let her rip, my friend—you see, I've gotten vulgar and profane. Trying to keep pace with my reputation, I guess. Well?"

"There are some other men in the apartment below who wish the same information. I have been waiting for you. It will save time if I answer all at once."

He pressed one of the white buttons and took the receiver from the hook of the desk telephone. An answer seemed immediately forthcoming.

"The last man has arrived," spoke the masked one into the mouthpiece. "Take the stairway to the floor above. The door will be open for you."

He put back the receiver, leaning forward in his chair. In the silence that fell compunctions came to Lanier, but he broke into a hoarse laugh

at them. He had offered to compromise with Fate and be decent, but Fate had treated him as shabbily as was her wont. Dorothy might have saved him. But with the finality of Dorothy's refusal had vanished his last desire to face the world unashamed. Now it was for money, for loot, for power to jeer at those who had disgraced him.

A click brought him back to present conditions, the click indicating the opening of a door other than the one by which he had entered. A number of men came into the room; six he counted when they had, in obedience to the masked man's gestures, taken seats facing him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I present to you your brother officer, Henry Lanier, late a Lieutenant in the United States Navy, but this hour commissioned a Commander in the Navy of the Republica Filipinas, and assigned as executive officer of the *Valkyrie.*"

At his words four of the men rose involuntarily.

"Republica Filipinas?" Their exclamations were semi-simultaneous, dragging out the two words into many.

"The Republic of the Philippines," answered the masked man, gravely, "whose President-elect, Senor Bernardo Esperaso, stands before you."

Esperaso looked about him, a smirk of self-satisfaction on his face.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

AGAIN the masked man waved them to their seats. "The introduction is not yet complete," he said, "for Commander Lanier is yet unaware of your identity. First, Commander Lanier, I present you to your superior officer, Captain Rolf Arundsen, once of the Royal Danish Navy——"

"Commonly known as 'Walrus Arundsen,'" broke in the piping voice of another man, a Briton by his accent. The heavily-built Dane, who had risen, turned his one good eye in protest upon the interpellator, and combed a huge, taffy-colored mustache with thick fingers. The ends of this hirsute appendage, projecting on either side of his thick nose, gave the impression of yellow ivory tusks, and the catechizing which had brought about the use of his sobriquet was quite apparent.

"Captain Arundsen commands the *Valkyrie,*" pursued the masked man, not noting the interruption. Lanier was on the Dane's blind

side, and the process of shaking hands necessitated his turning. He noted that the single blue eye was mild and inquiring as a little child's, but that the eyebrow overshadowing it was bushy and tangle-haired. Arundsen grunted something and sat down.

"The next gentleman"—the masked man designated the Englishman who had broken in—"was once an English naval officer. He calls himself James Phillips. He——"

"I say, cut the real article," interposed the Briton. "That's in the agreement, y' know. No names. Phillips is a dashed sight better than I deserve." He shook hands with Lanier. He was a clean-looking, well-groomed man with the undeniable marks of the patrician—well-shaped head, thin nose, slender neck. His mouth was boyish, his eyes red-rimmed as one who indulges too freely in intoxicants.

"Whisht! he's a Pr-rince in disguise, ye must be rimimbering," was the comment of the prematurely-grey Irishman, who was next presented as Brian O'Shane, formerly a R. N. R. man whose ticket had been 'dirtied' and command taken away for having been drunk when his ship went to pieces on a rock. " 'Tis 'Prince Bertie' ye should call him, due to the belief that he's own kin to the Pr-rince of Whales, bad cess to him."

"And by the same token," drawled Phillips, giving a passable imitation of O'Shane's accent

and fog-horn voice, "we refer to our French friend O'Shane as 'Hoofer,' due to the belief that his feet were intended for a man of larger size."

Which, as Lanier noted, was a fact that applied equally to the over-adequate amount of space taken up by the Irishman's huge, red hands.

The masked man had been silent while the persiflage circulated, but now gave three staccato raps on the teak table with the knuckles of his gloved hand. He presented the other men briefly: General Pfferkorn, a rubicund Swiss mercenary, who was to have charge of the drilling of prospective recruits for the army; Sturm-Sturmson, a Norse-American and former chief gunner in the United States Navy, who was to look after the mechanical side of the gunnery; Hendrik Christian, of the Swedish merchant marine, who would have personal supervision of the crew of the *Valkyrie.* Phillips was commissioned a lieutenant-commander; O'Shane, a lieutenant; Sturmson and Christian, ensigns, all of the Navy of the Philippine Republic.

"So far as the engineer officers are concerned," went on the masked man, drumming his black-gloved fingers on the table, "they are not officers of the Philippine navy, but merely employes. They are not in the secret, and it is for you gentlemen to see that they obey orders and observe discretion if they discover any-

thing. Their names are MacTavish, Raeburn, Gillespie and MacCullom, all Scotch, as you may notice, and so long as the pay is forthcoming regularly I do not think we will have much to fear from them; but for the rest of you, an explanation is necessary. General Pfferkorn and Captain Arundsen are already in my confidence. To them what I say is repetition. The other gentlemen will no doubt find it interesting."

He arose and crossed the room, deflecting one of the dragon lamps so that its light fell upon a large map of the Chinese coast, Japan, the Philippines and other islands.

"You observe," he made remark, pointing with his black-gloved index finger, "I have drawn what appears to be an irregular triangle. The apex is Hong-Kong. The black line indicates the routes of the steamers between Singapore and Hong-Kong, and is the right side of the triangle; the base indicates the routes between Singapore and Manila; the left side the routes between Manila and Hong-Kong. These routes are also taken by vessels from Saigon, Tonquin and the other Philippine and Polynesian ports. The space bounded by these lines is seldom traversed by ships, and includes a considerable portion of the South China Sea. Nearly in the centre of this space you will see some black dots representing the Paracel Islands; nearer the Philippines an irregular figure indicating the Macclesfield Banks. Below

these banks and almost directly in line with St. Bernardino Strait of the Island of Luzon, I have marked a star. This indicates an uninhabited island, five square miles in size. No nation has ever troubled to claim it. This is to be the seat of operations from which the invasion of the Philippines is to be directed."

"Prince Bertie" Phillips craned his slender neck forward and stared with characteristic British phlegm. The Scandinavians—Arundsen, Christian and Sturmson—looked stolidly apathetic. Brian O'Shane struck a match and ignited his pipe, while General Pfferkorn appeared to be asleep and unnoting. Lanier looked about him, insolently defiant.

"The gentlemen in charge of the invasion are Señors Esperaso, Aorto and Araza y Tagliono, Messieurs Goldbaum and Conkling, and Herr von Klingen. They form the Philippine Junta of Hong-Kong, of which Señor Esperaso is President, and when he returns to that city the six gentlemen of the Junta will sail for the island, where they will await the coming of the *Valkyrie*. They will sail on a schooner of their own, and no one will know where they go.

"At the present time there is a ship at the island, sent there by my orders. It contains workmen, building material and arms. The workmen have erected barracks, an arsenal and a bungalow for the chiefs. The arsenal contains ten thousand rifles, somewhat of the Krag-

Jorgensen pattern; five hundred revolvers, four Krupp cannon and four Maxim rapid-firing guns, besides many hundred thousand rounds of ammunition, thousands of uniforms, shells, Shimose powder and other munitions of war."

He smiled thinly, for there was almost incredulous amazement depicted on their faces. The gigantic scale on which the enterprise was to be conducted was a novelty. Most of these men had served on filibustering expeditions before, expeditions doomed to failure from the outset; unripe affairs planned by fools with money to waste for concessions. But this one reeked more of the odor of Panama, a Gargantuan scheme, financed deliberately and lavishly, and with a care for success.

"In the hills back there"—he waved toward Moji—"General Pfferkorn and his aids are drilling five hundred men. These are mercenaries, janissaries, soldiers of fortune—what you wish—the riff-raff of the Japanese ports, mostly Europeans and mostly soldiers. Outside in the harbor lies a heavily-armored cruiser rechristened the *Valkyrie*, which Captain Arundsen will command. Two weeks from to-day, all things being in readiness, this ship will sail for the island rendezvous, carrying the five hundred mercenaries, the nucleus of the army of the new Republic. In Shanghai and Hong-Kong other officers have recruited men of the same ilk, and these will be transported to the island later and

by another boat. Both the *Valkyrie* and the *Dragon* (the second cruiser) will carry more arms and ammunition."

He paused and took a cigarette from a box on the table, a cigarette mostly paper tube. He lighted this, took several whiffs and placed it on the box, the burning end outward.

"So far as the disaffection in the Philippines themselves is concerned, I must ask you to believe that we would not go ahead with such a costly scheme were we not sure of our people. Our agents have worked among them this last year; arms and ammunition have been smuggled in small quantities and carefully distributed. The men who fought for Aguinaldo will fight for us—they would fight for anybody who makes promises." There was a sneering twitch to his lips. "Three-quarters of the brown soldiers of the Constabulary will desert to our standard, bringing with them their Government arms and ammunition. A month from to-day we will land five hundred white mercenaries on Luzon, five hundred on Panay, five hundred on Cebu. The natives will flock to our standard and so will the Constabulary. The white men will officer the brown ones, and will be so distributed that there will be no retreating. There are something less than ten thousand American soldiers in the Philippines, scattered in small garrisons. It will be a month before aid from the United States can be sent; three months

before an army can be landed. By that time Manila, Iloilo and Cebu will fly the flag of the Republic, and the Republic itself a thing established."

"But the Navy—the Pacific Squadron?" began Lanier.

"The Pacific Squadron is at the present time stationed at Hong-Kong. The date of our invasion of the Philippines is also the date of a great ball to be given by the Governor-General of Hong-Kong. That night practically all of the officers and most of the men will be ashore. It has been planned in Hong-Kong that, during their absence, the machinery of the ships be irreparably damaged. No!"—he raised his hand protestingly—"we court no duplication of the *Maine* disaster. That would injure our cause. The machinery will be damaged, that is all. The same plan will be carried out with the few ships remaining in Manila harbor, and that, I think, removes the danger of the Navy until the Republic is on a firm footing. And now, gentlemen, I think the matter fully explained."

No one spoke for some space of time. The enormity of the thing was not to be grasped in a fleeting moment. Even the hardened adventurers who listened, servers under many flags, renegades, outlawed men, paused at the prospect which confronted them.

The Englishman, Phillips, was the first to recover his composure. "May I ask," he in-

quired, "who pays the shot?—where are the millions to put the scheme afoot to come from?"

"You may not," answered the black-masked man.

"Nor hazard a guess?" The Englishman's tone was aristocratically insolent.

"Guessing is dangerous, Lieutenant-Commander Phillips," returned the man. "I should not wear a mask if I wished you to know even my identity. And I am but an agent. But, believe me, there is a force of magnitude behind this plan, a Moving Finger, that writes. And what it writes is plain for all to see. But when it does not write, only fools seek to draw aside the veil."

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

It is a curious fact that the greatest of events have their genesis in the most trivial occurrences, and he who doubts this may recall the fact that had Richard been supplied with that horse for which he generously offered his kingdom, English history of that date as it now stands would be mere romantic fiction. To mention more instances of similar nature would be needlessly supererogative, for those who believe not are not to be coerced from their unbelieving by such small matters as facts.

All this by way of leading up to the fact that the welfare of the United States possessions in Asiatic waters once depended upon such a trivial thing as the purchase of six bathing suits, a sad blow at the root of romance as conceived by those neo-romancists of the dagger-and-cloak variety, but still a fact and a proven one.

There is a custom on certain Pacific liners to allow the passengers to bathe in the ocean at

least once during their passage after the vessel reaches tropical waters. It is an old custom, and probably dates back to the days when ships were not supplied with bathrooms, but nevertheless it *is* a custom, and should passengers choose to take advantage of it, and the ship have a few hours to spare, the captain is of necessity obliged to aid in the bathing to the extent of laying-to and lowering a steel wire netting.

Dorothy Gordon had heard of the custom, and from the time the *Sultana* left Nagasaki her request for its fulfilment had been a thorn in the side of the R.N.R. man who commanded that liner. At Shanghai he was non-committal, but at Hong-Kong he admitted that he had a little superfluous time between that port and Manila, and somewhere in the South China Sea he would give the ancient custom a chance of revival. This was Miss Dorothy's cue to call around her supporters and bid them purchase bathing suits. The five went ashore together, left Mrs. Carroll Lee-Brooks at the King Edward Hotel drinking tea, and somewhere on the Victoria road purchased the necessary attire, Ochs having some trouble in getting one of sufficient elasticity to encase his corpulence, and Dr. Schlauss Hyman being forced into the humiliating position of taking a boy's size, for none of the adults' costumes held snugly to his person.

At Hong-Kong also Esperaso, who had made some ill-rewarded attempts to be gallant to Miss

Gordon, left the *Sultana,* and as they were returning to the *King Edward* to convey Mrs. Lee-Brooks back to the ship, the *mestizo* passed them on the Desbrosses Road. He had two companions, one a tall man of florid complexion and auburn hair, the other small, bird-eyed, with a pinched-in waist and general air of effeminacy. Esperaso swept his hat off in what he imagined grandeza fashion, and his companions stared at the girl.

"Who are those men?" she asked Brent.

"I've never seen them before," he answered, "but I guess I know them by their descriptions. I think they are two more of the precious crew that make up the Philippine Junta. The little chap with blue eyes and blonde hair might be Charles Carr Conkling—'Chirping Charlie,' an effeminate cut-throat. The big fellow has Filipino blood, although it doesn't show. His father was an Andalusian and they have that color of hair. His name is Leon Aorto—'El Colorado Aorto'—'Aorto, the Red.' These 'brotherhood' people all have nicknames. They call Esperaso 'the Wasp.' "

"Does he sting?" asked Dreen, who held the *mestizo* lightly.

"He's stung the United States once or twice, my boy," said Pursey Ochs, with unexpected gravity. "I've heard of that gang before, Brent—that Junta."

"Most newspaper-men have," replied Brent, carelessly, as they entered the hotel.

They had been a day and a half out from Hong-Kong before Captain Robinson redeemed his promise. Two hours had passed since tiffin when that officer doffed his cap to Miss Dorothy Gordon and informed her that the ship was about to lay-to, and that if she and her friends wished to swim in the ocean their chance had come. Ever the soul of brevity, he replaced his gold-flowered cap and passed on. Dorothy turned to her usual audience, Brent, Ochs, Dreen and Hyman, all of whom were sitting or lounging in positions near her or her aunt.

"Isn't it a perfectly delightful day for it?" she cooed exultingly. "See, that's the steel net they lower to protect us from sharks or anything horrid. Isn't it splendid!" She gave a little ecstatic shudder.

"Dorothy!" exclaimed Mrs. Carroll Lee-Brooks, laboriously, "do you mean to tell me you are going down into that awful ocean?"

"I am," replied the girl.

Mrs. Lee-Brooks arose and eyed the assembled five: a glance of ineffable scorn; then slowly, even majestically, retreated to the saloon.

"We've got to hurry," said Dorothy, oblivious of the scorn and majesty, "because the captain said we could only have an hour altogether. None of *you* are afraid of the 'awful ocean,' I hope?"

"Not much," came promptly from Hopworth K. Dreen.

"I should say not," snorted that eminent medical light, Dr. Schlauss Hyman; while the editor of the *Daily Star* of St. Louis, Mo., emitted only the derisive monosyllable, "Huh!" Brent contented himself with silence.

"Well, then," said Dorothy brightly, "all of you hurry and get on your bathing suits. I know you're a good swimmer, Mr. Dreen, and you must look just fine in a bathing suit."

Dreen cleared his throat and appeared gratified. He was about to say something weighty, but Dorothy cut in again with the admonishment, "Hurry now, all of you!" and entered the saloon. Brent looked at the other three and for the first time in ten minutes spoke.

"If you're not good swimmers," he advised, with mistaken kindness, "you'd better not go. I'll tell Miss Gordon it isn't fair to expect men who can't swim well to——"

"I learned to swim when you were toddling, Brent," interrupted Ochs, truculently. He looked at the presumptuous one from the pinnacle of thirty-two. He imagined Brent to be some six years younger, an opinion founded on superficialities.

"I took a medal-thing at Yale for swimming," remarked Hopworth K. Dreen, his manner very dignified and implying that this statement was sufficient disclaimer for Brent's implication.

Brent eyed Dr. Schlauss Hyman and smiled questioningly.

"I can swim all right," said that gentleman, with unnecessary heat, and the four sought their cabins. Brent and Dreen were the only two who wanted to swim. Schlauss Hyman was indifferent toward it, while Pursey Ochs detested any form of physical exercise. But each one of the four individually (though not for one single moment collectively) took a considerable interest in Miss Gordon, and did not propose to allow one mite of advantage to a rival by seeming fear of the "awful ocean."

Brent's slim form and apparent foppery were forgotten when he appeared on deck in his trunks and jersey, for his appearance in this scanty attire quite belied the impression previously given that he was a person of elegant leisure. His tanned skin showed beneath it curves and ridges of muscle; his chest, left bare by the jersey, was full and broad. When he drew up his arm the muscles swelled into great knots and the upper-arm seemed almost leg-size.

There was aboard the usual first-cabin crowd one finds on a Pacific liner after Hong-Kong has been passed, mostly Philippine Civil Government employes, appointed through the Civil Service Commission, generally from the backwoods, and looking forward to the Philippines as mostly an affair of palm-trees, cocoanuts and

gayly-colored parrots; there were school teachers, bookkeepers, stenographers, the majority of whom were crowded along the guard-rails of the saloon and boat decks, watching Dorothy Gordon and Hopworth Dreen, who were already in the water, and were performing various aquatic feats for the benefit of their audience.

Brent descended the accommodation ladder, the sailor detailed to keep a lookout for the swimmers making way for him on the lower steps. One of the ship's boats had been swung from its davits, and was moored to the ladder-railing with a rope. The long, wide wire enclosure, peeping over the bluish-black swell of the ocean, was suspended from adjustable cranes above and fastened by means of lock-hooks secured in the lower portholes. This net had four sides and a bottom and projected sufficiently above the water to keep out sharks and other denizens of the deep whose extended acquaintance was undesired. It was, in fact, similar in appearance to a circus cage without a top, only collapsible and constructed to be stowed away compactly when not in use. It had not been used for some time and was a trifle rusty, but was apparently amply adequate for the pursuance of its purpose.

Other things contributed to add to its protection, and make the indulgence of the aquatics desired seemingly without danger to those concerned. The day was a typically tropic one, the

water languorously embracing, warm and tepid. The lambent rays of an equatorial mid-afternoon sun caressed the swimmers with barbarous beneficence. Cotton-wool clouds sailed through a vista of ultramarine eastern sky.

When the five Americans had all safely launched themselves in the miniature lake made by the netting screen they contrived amongst them to disturb that portion of the Pacific considerably, splashing upward quantities of spray and making barking noises. Ochs, breathing fatly, was taking excellent care not to allow more than a few feet of water to spread between himself and the moored ship's-boat, at the bows of which he clutched in intermittent spasms. Dreen and Brent were swimming abreast with Dorothy, apparently intent on outdoing each the other in various "wet-bobbing" vagaries. The two men and the girl were excellent swimmers, Dorothy having as firm a stroke as it was reputed she had a bridle-hand for cross-country jumping. Schlauss Hyman was as hopelessly bad as Ochs, and imitated that worthy's example in keeping himself and the ship's boat in as much the same location as possible.

It was a scene very modern and civilized, such as we expect to see in the papers of our excellent illustrated weeklies. The great ocean liner, resting gently on the placid sea, its sheer bulk pierced with copper-lined portholes that seemed so many curious eyes. Brave with paint,

scrubbed so white that the sun's glare upon it hurt the eyes, with gleaming brass fittings and iron accoutrements—a model of a passenger liner; its sides thronged with men and women in white clothes, holding parasols, their flufferies blowing seaward in the gentle breeze that fluttered over the waves, feathering the blue-black swells and capping them fleecily; some Chinese sailors coiling rope; some men sending puffs of smoke upward from cigars and cigarettes; the captain on the bridge, his cap off, the wind ruffling his close-cut hair; in the water the glint of blue bathing suits, with red, orange and green trimmings; a rather stout man and a rather thin one holding to the side of a white ship's-boat, on the bows of which were painted in black letters *Sultana*. Everyone has seen just such photographs of vessels in tropical waters, and they have suggested to no one the idea of adventure and romance any more than, as has been before suggested, the fact of the purchase of six bathing suits. Yet as in some tragic scenic drama the lights suddenly close upon a Garden of Hesperides and leave the onlookers in Stygian darkness, so did the great storm blot out this peaceful scene with the same fatal facility that the master-electrician sends blackness to a crowded theatre.

The swimmers had looked up and seen the sun shining; they had heard the people on the decks above them laughing inconsequentially;

the last remembrance was that all was peaceful, warm, languid, replete with innocent enjoyment. Yet the following moment held in it sudden cries of warning; the shrieking of their fellow-passengers to come aboard; terrified chattering from the Celestials between decks; hoarse shouts of command from the ship's officers; wild exhortation from the captain of the *Sultana,* reduced by the suddenness of the happening to jumbled oaths.

Without notice the sun had hidden itself. The sky darkened, darkened, darkened, until one vaguely surmised a geyser of ink spewed upward. The water trembled, then surged, in increasing rotary motion. A rod before the ship danced a whirling spiral column of furious foam, gaining height as it approached, sizzling sibilantly.

"Typhoon!" yelled the officer of the deck. "Get below—all passengers below!"

"Waterspout!" came indistinctly from someone.

"Those people in the water—are they *crazy?*" The officer had rushed down the accommodation ladder. The sailor on the steps was waked from his comfortable doze, his clay pipe smashing as he jumped to his feet.

"Typhoon! Quick! Climb aboard. For God's sake, lady——"

His hand was outstretched.

Dreen and Brent had seized Dorothy and with

sheer brutal strength nearly tore her apart as they dragged her toward the ship. Something crashed. Both men clutched for the nearest solid thing, and encountered the gunwale of the ship's-boat. Their free hands clutched, and the backward surge seemed to compel of their fingers the elasticity of rubber.

"Catch hold, you, too," Brent shouted in the girl's ear, "and hold tight—hold tight!"

Dorothy, coughing out the acrid water, felt tremblingly for the gunwale, fumbled, caught it. Brent's arm still encircled her quivering, heaving body. For all her terror and fright, the thrill that went through her betokened neither of the two—it was one of pleasurable excitement. She felt a curious condition of safety, though the wind shrieked and the waves dashed over her. Dreen had taken *his* arm away, appalled for the moment by the intensity of the storm's wrath.

She had but placed her fingers on the boat, gripping the wood, when something cracked, staccato, pistol-like—it was the snapping of the rope that held the ship's boat to the liner's ladder. Free of its strain, the little craft heeled, swayed from side to side, but the equal weight on both gunwales kept it right-side up, and it raced away over the seething sea. The great fog-horn of the *Sultana* tooted in dismal dismay; second by second the toots became less distinct.

They were adrift in a typhoon, four men and a girl, the exponents of civilization, dependent for their lives on their thews and sinews and such compassion as the storm-wraith might find in its heart to show.

CHAPTER VI

THE TYPHOON

Brent was of that curious ilk that searches for the suitable simile in the event of unclassified cataclysms. Now he mentally determined that they were on an enormous springing-board, the tension of which sent them hurtling hundreds of feet in air, the laws of gravitation returning them with the same startling velocity. The water was in his nostrils, his ears and his mouth, and his ozone-starved lungs threatened him with suffocation. His right arm was still crooked firmly about Dorothy's waist, for he feared faintness on her part and subsequent relinquishment of her hold, and his left arm was socket-strained by the extra burden it bore.

Half-stifled groans and sputterings from the opposite side of the boat told him that there had been no separation of the faithful five, for he had ready recognizance of the tones of Ochs and Hyman. Ochs was cursing steadily and fluently, when he was able to disgorge enough water to articulate, his oaths generally bisected by

shudders and coughs. Hyman was hawking out water, and praying rapidly in Hebrew, using long exhortations from the Thorah which had recurred to him, parrot-fashion, in his time of need, and in which he seemed to put a pathetic faith.

They were all in a sufficiently dangerous situation, but Brent was, by long odds, the least favorably placed. The others had their full complement of arms to sustain them, but for him there was only one to support his own weight and part of Dorothy's to boot. The palm of his hand was, moreover, lacerated and bleeding, for he had, in his unwitting clutch, fastened his grip upon one of the boat's tholes, and dared not shift less he be swept into the swirling waters with his precious burden. His knuckles impressed him as about to burst through their skin-covering, and his joints were weak and sore from the strain. Only the control of mind over muscle kept his hold secure. The pain of the bleeding hand, stung by the brine, and the aching arm to climax, would have been in themselves sufficient reasons for him to find the situation intolerable and welcome his worldly exit as bringing assuagement. But he was not thinking very much about himself; almost altogether were his thoughts of the girl, whose trembling little body lay confidently in the crook of his arm. He could feel the rapid pit-a-pat of her heart and the quivering of her breasts where his

hand clutched her, and for all his pain there was something of a delirious pleasure in the knowledge that she was relying upon him.

"Keep your nerve!" he would shout intermittently, piercing the almost sound-proof tumult. He would require more breath, then again: "Keep up your nerve, little girl—no losing game—we'll win—keep your nerve—you're all right! Sure, I'll hold you tight!" (In such moments prim Lindley Murrays groan ghostily.) "Don't faint or anything like that—I'm going to see you through!"

Not in orderly sequence, these incitements to courage, but between battles with the breakers. They were taxes upon his over-strained lungs and outrages of his common-sense. He held small belief that they would have further extended acquaintance with the world, deeming escape incredible. But that she should recognize her shroud in the white-caps was repellant to him. If death must come, let it be while she thought of life, leaving to the transition the horror. It was better unaided by terrified apprehension.

Once he heard her answer in a low, quivering voice: "I'm not going to faint. I—can—get—along. Hold on yourself. Please hold!"

As a general hurls brigade after brigade against an enemy's position, so the storm-wraith rolled his black breakers, brave in their white plumes, against them. Above, the equally

ebon sky lowered; an observer prejudiced in favor of the stronger side. The clouds collided, sending forth reverberating doom crashes, their black masses flagellated by the flame-whip of the lightning. The wind shrieked and stormed. Some fluttering sea-birds honked pitifully, their fluttering course aimless, for the storm carried them where it listed. One, with a broken pinion, sank into the white crest of a rising water-mountain and was carried almost to the altitude of former winged flights.

Such a time is interminable. The castaways did not attempt to measure it by their accepted standards, for such are devised to cover placid, uncrowded spaces. They hoped for respite, believing grimly they were hoping against hope. Long since each had said a *te mortuiis,* and saluted the world they knew for the last time.

The boat had long been full of water; only air-tight chambers had prevented its sinking. Now, when a wave overwhelmed them, they had no longer the strength to rise with it, but were smotheringly engulfed. It was a matter of time when——

But abruptly the wind died down and became in early eventuality a mere rustling zephyr. As a mill-pond which has its placidity disturbed by the sinking of a hurled something, the waves ceased to rush and roar; indeed from blows came to caresses, licking the castaways lovingly almost in a manner of a pack of great, naughty

dogs. Synchronously, the sky's black curtain parted, revealing rose-reds and violet-blues. Again they noted that it was warm.

A sunbeam filtered through the clouds, finding its color concomitant in Dorothy's hair. A sea-mew shrilled a joyous note. All was again the tropical world of sunshine.

A SUNBEAM FLICKERED THROUGH THE CLOUDS, FINDING ITS WAY OF IN DOROTHY'S HAIR

CHAPTER VII

THE HAND OF JAPAN

So abrupt their recall from the portals of the spirit-world that their realization was unable to force an isochronism. They still clutched the gunwales; still nerved themselves to withstand the shock of the waves. Gradually it was borne in upon them that they were not to be victims of the storm, and all five let loose their pent-up spirits in sobs, which the men tried unavailably to check, each one too conscious of his own shame to note that the others were in a similar condition. Brent came out of the tearful stage first, to observe that the girl was crying heart-brokenly.

"There, there!" he soothed, endeavoring manfully to swallow the lump in his own throat. "There—there; it's all over now, and we've pulled through. And you've been a plucky kid, a damn plucky kid!"

It was not profanity; it was but an example of the inadequacy of praise. So genuine an outburst was it that the girl cried more softly

and presently smiled through her tears. Somehow the spoken words seemed to bring composure to the entire party, and they put up each a hand to wipe from their eyes the saline encrustation, after which they blinked recognition. Dorothy, following the impulse of all womankind, put her hand to her hair.

"I'll — never — get—it—out—all that salt, salt water," she said, the sobs still in her voice. "I wish I'd put on a bathing-cap."

Brent released her, laughing weakly, and caught at the gunwale with the hand that had held her safe, releasing the one that had sustained them, and which showed torn and lacerated. The salt of the water had made the raw surface pain almost insufferably, and the tears of pain stood out in the corners of his eyes. He wanted to curse, to tell them what he was enduring, to kick and beat something, but he held himself sternly in hand, and only the twitching of his thin lips gave evidence of his internal tumult. Seeking distraction, he looked across at Pursey Ochs and Schlauss Hyman, who were hanging on in dejected attitudes, panting shortly, painfully; then his eyes shifted to Dreen, who had his head against the side of the boat, shaking it in his convulsive shuddering.

"Well," he said, forcing an even tone and taking the initiative, as does always the strongest in time of necessary action. "One of us ought to get inside of the boat and bail her out.

Then the rest can get in. You, Miss Dorothy, you're the lightest. It's too full of water to stand much weight. Climb in!"

She laughed constrainedly and attempted to raise herself to the level of the gunwales, but the attempt was as weak as the laugh. She fell back and her head went under water.

"I can't," she gasped, as the head reappeared. "*You'll* have to do it, Mr. Brent."

He did not argue incapacity or pain, but gripped the gunwale, set his teeth, took a long breath and drew himself steadily up until his shoulders were on a level with the boat-tholes. Letting loose he floundered into the boat. When he arose and stood in the centre he found that the water was deep enough to cover the lower part of his legs.

"Have to get this out somehow," he muttered dully, and bethought him of the locker, which he endeavored to open. Having only his left hand fit for service, the operation consumed more time than seemed to be necessary to the others, and the three men in the water cried roughly to him to hasten. He continued, not answering them, and as reward of his efforts found a tin bucket, with which he began to relieve the boat of its water. The first bucketful fell upon the head and shoulders of Hopworth K. Dreen.

"Say, what the hell are you doing?" inquired Dreen, with acidity.

"Bailing the boat. And if *you* think you can do it any better, suppose you try."

The immersed one growled something indistinct, turned to survey Dorothy, flushed in embarrassment, and directed his gaze to the horizon. He was rather a simple-minded youngster and, never having found himself in like circumstance, was at a loss for conversation to fit the occasion's need.

"Fearful weather, wasn't it?" he finally evolved, his eyes again meeting hers. His remark was greeted with a hoarse laugh emanating from Mr. Pursey Ochs, whose stout, but no longer rosy, countenance was in Dreen's direct line of vision across the way.

"What do you think this is?" asked Ochs, with bitter irony. "Nice little Sunday-school picnic party caught on a boat-lake in a gust, with teacher on shore wringing her hands and the ice-cream melting?"

"Oh, you shut up!" was Dreen's surly response. "Like to know who's talking to *you?*" He frowned upon Ochs, and hailed Schlauss Hyman, whose Vandyke beard and flowing mustachios were soaked into, respectively, a triangle and a horizontal line.

"You look like a drowned rat, Doc," said the ex-football player, exchanging his displeasured countenance for a maliciously grinning one.

Hyman surveyed Dreen steadily, his gimlet eyes somewhat dull from the mental anguish so

recently his. He held on with one hand, while he fished for his *pince-nez,* which the storm buffets had blown from his nose and which hung suspended by its gold chain from behind the ear. He adjusted it.

"Puppies *generally* know rats when they see them, so you ought to know."

"Well, then, what do I look like?" Dorothy had intent that the subject take a less disagreeable trend, and she smiled bravely, ignoring her aching arms.

"Oh! *you* look all right," responded Dreen, brusquely.

"Sure you do," added Pursey Ochs.

"Like a mermaid," murmured the doctor, his eyes getting soft again. "And you're a very brave young lady, Miss Dorothy."

"Sure you are," confirmed Pursey Ochs.

"Of course——"

Brent broke off Dreen's eulogy at its genesis. "This is no Greek chorus," he informed him impatiently. "My arms are pretty tired. I'll get out and you climb in and finish the bailing."

Dreen resented the tone. "I don't feel like bailing," said he. "And when you want me to do a thing, ask me civilly, *Mr.* Brent!"

Dorothy noted that Brent's lips flattened themselves against his teeth, and that the suction drew them tense and hard. She had never agreed with the others in their estimate of Brent, and had not failed previously to note the

strength of jaw, the obstinacy of chin, but she had not imagined that his clean-shaven face could reflect a look so hard and sinister. It was a fleeting glance of but a second's duration perhaps, and Brent turned to Ochs, holding out his uninjured hand.

"You bail, Ochs."

The St. Louis editor shook his head, asseverating that he was unable to drag himself into the boat, and supplementing the fact of this inability by pointing out, with a keen sense of equilibrium, that the removal of so much weight as his from that side of the boat would doubtless mean an upsetting.

"Take Hyman there," he offered remedially. "He don't weigh much more'n a pound of candles. Haul *him* in."

The little doctor favored Ochs with a look indicating no particular regard for its subject, but, not putting his avoirdupois to a conversational test, tugged hard at the gunwale, and raised himself to the boat-tholes, where he hung, red-faced and unable to get further. Brent aided him with what strength was left him, and, the doctor in, sat down heavily, his face pain-twitched. Remembering Dorothy, he got down on his knees and stretched out both hands.

"Hyman, go on the other side to balance it. Ochs' and Dreen's weight will keep the boat steady. Now, Miss Dorothy, help all you can, for I'm feeling rather weak."

He exerted the last of his strength to haul the girl into the boat. She seated herself, Brent doing likewise. Looking at her pink palms, now corrugated into little flesh-ridges, she shivered to see them stained with blood. She dabbled her fingers in the water over the side and washed off the blood, finding that she was not cut. A puzzled look crept into her eyes, and abruptly she took Brent's hands, shuddering when she noted the condition of the left one.

"Oh, *Mr. Brent!*" she wailed. "Your poor hand, your poor hand!"

He shrugged his shoulders, simulating indifference and keeping the pain out of his eyes. Looking away from her, the sight of Dreen rocking the boat by attempting to clamber in angered him.

"Don't *do* that!" he commanded, icily. "You and Ochs balance one another until we've bailed the boat. Stay where you are."

Dreen eyed him. "Who are you, to give orders?" he snarled. "I'm tired of hanging on here, while you sit in the boat. Ain't *you*, Ochs?"

Ochs was weak and flabby and in considerable discomfort, but he had a soul above quarreling with the things that had to be.

"Forget it!" he advised. "Stay where you are!"

The Yale man thought otherwise, and voiced

his opinion in startlingly descriptive language directed toward Brent.

"If you try to get in this boat until it's bailed I'll knock you back—that's flat," said Brent. Dreen noted that the speaker was in a position to accomplish this threat without trouble, and he sank back growling.

"When we get somewhere on dry land—or on a ship—I'll fix *your* business, *Mister* Brent."

The bailing continued in silence, while the boat drifted aimlessly, the waves lapping gently against her sides. Before them rose a bank of rose-colored vapor, through which the sun shot its golden arrows. The girl took the bailer from Hyman's hands, and he allowed it, sinking to a place beside Brent, groaning. His eyes stared away to the horizon.

"No sign of the *Sultana,* Brent?"

"No."

"What's become of her? What are we going to do?"

Brent shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose we ought to thank God we escaped from the storm," he said.

"Yes—but escaped to what? We've lost the oars. There isn't any water to drink—nothing to eat! What *are* we to do?" His face was haggard, his tones despairing.

The shrug was repeated. The silence enveloped them again, broken only by the splash of

the water that Dorothy was throwing from the boat.

"*There!*" she said, at length. "Now it's practically all out. Don't you think Mr. Dreen and Mr. Ochs can come in now?" Her gesture was for Brent. He nodded, and stretched out his hand to Dreen.

"Hyman and you, Miss Dorothy, try to help Ochs."

There was some tugging and straining of muscles before the dripping men were within, the operation being accompanied by much trembling of the boat, which came perilously close to "turning turtle." Ochs curled himself up in the stern, panting. Dreen stretched himself full length at the bottom of the boat. Hyman's hopeless gaze was again directed to Brent.

"Is there any chance of the *Sultana* picking us up?" he asked.

Brent coughed and avoided Dorothy's gaze. He cleared his throat and looked about him uneasily, for his companions seemed to be holding their breath while they waited for his answer.

"It's just as well to face the truth," he blurted out, finally. "The *Sultana* had all it could do to take care of itself in the typhoon. She may be at the bottom of the sea, for all we know. We may be lucky in being off of her, who knows? Anything that offers any resistance to a typhoon is bound to suffer badly. Our little boat offered

no resistance, and we were fortunately balanced, so we were simply carried before the storm at an astounding speed. We may be fifty miles from where the thing struck us. The *Sultana* probably battled with the storm and tried to keep in her course. So, it's hard to say——"

He was interrupted by a shrill cry from the girl.

"Oh, look—*look!* Isn't that *land?* Right in front of us—isn't it? Oh, isn't it?"

The rose-colored mist had drifted slowly away, and as the four men turned, following the direction of Dorothy's outstretched finger, they saw, rising out of the sapphire waters, white sand glittering in the fading sunlight of late afternoon.

"Land!" breathed Schlauss Hyman, his voice hushed.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dreen, jumping up suddenly and imperilling the safety of the boat.

"It won't do us any good if you don't cut *that* out," remarked Pursey Ochs.

Brent looked at Dorothy, her finger still pointing, her eyes fixed on the green and silver of the promised land. "Oh, you *dear* kid!" he said to himself, quite softly, and he forgot his pain momentarily in the warm glow of tenderness that came over him. "You dear little—dear little kid, you!" And in the words there was an infinite gentle-kindness.

The tide was sweeping them rapidly to shore

and to sight of masses of palms, herbage, ferns and creepers. The white shingle was irregular, twenty rods from the woods in parts, hardly a yard in others. Two great rocks, emerald-verdured, stood out like giant monoliths, rising some fifty feet in air, and a little brook trickled down the slope behind and fell between them, making a miniature waterfall like a silver cord suspended in mid-air. On the wooded slope from which it ran, grew cocoa palms, lofty and majestic; feathery cabbage-palms, dragon trees, camphors and sandalwoods; from intertangled branches hung bread-fruit, bananas and pumelos. As the boat drifted in to shore the castaways looked over the side, and saw that the water was no longer blue-black, but translucent green, jade-colored; at its bottom marvelously tinted rocks and oddly shaped shells made a fairy playground for the fishes, lizards and leeches that disported themselves there. To the right of the boat's idle course arose a coral reef, pale pink, jagged and extending half-way around the curve of the shore.

"Fortunate we didn't hit that," remarked Brent, grimly. "If we had——"

His gloomy reflections were cut loose by a sudden jar and a grating against the boat's keel. He swung over the side with the boat's hawser in hand, tugging toward shore in water up to his thighs. Dreen was quick to follow his example, and between them they dragged the boat

to land, and with the assistance of Ochs and Hyman pulled it considerably above the high-water mark, as indicated by the conch-shells and sea-weed.

Brent faced his companions with a grave face. "I'm not a religious man;" he said, "and I don't kneel very often. But I'm going to thank God for *this*. I tell you, boys, it's—well, it's a pity that sort of thing reeks of hypocrisy and cant. It's better unspoken, I guess."

He closed his eyes and bowed his head. Dorothy followed his example; sheepishly Dreen did the same, and Hyman, after glancing about him, began to mumble a prayer rapidly. Only Pursey Ochs stood aloof trying to force a grin of amusement—for Mr. Ochs was an iconoclast.

It was soon over, and the castaways opened their eyes, regarding the situation. The slope of the forest confronted them; in one place it had the appearance of having had a path blazed through it. To this Brent turned his way.

As they proceeded after him the castaways eyed one another. They were considering their plight. Four men and a girl, on an island, without food or the means to procure it; all in abbreviated attire, necks and arms bare. Bare-legged and bare-footed, too, except Dorothy, who had worn bathing stockings, and slightly advantaged them in that respect.

Brent called a halt at the foot of the path and spoke briefly:

"This looks like a road. It's going to be hard to travel, but it's getting on toward night, and we've got to have some shelter and something to eat. This island ought to be inhabited. The chances are that it is. And I think we'd better find out."

There was sound sense in what he said and they recognized it. They were tired and their bodies ached, but they had heard of the danger of sleeping out-of-doors on a tropical night, for such nights were reminiscent of chills, fever, mosquitoes, creeping things. They nodded assent, and Brent led the way up the path.

The sharp stones, flinty rocks and prickly bushes all hurt his feet, but the road must be traversed, and Brent endured the discomforts stoically. Not so Ochs, Dreen and Hyman, who intermittently gave vent to exclamations of anger and pain when their unprotected feet came into contact with obstacles destructive to the cuticle. But all were animated by the knowledge of necessity, and they passed on through a wilderness of orchids, sweet, sickly and blazing rainbow colors at them. Paroquets screamed from overhead. Monkeys chattered volubly, swinging away to their fastnesses and eyeing the newcomers with disfavor. The air was very heavy with the odors of the Far East, sandalwood, camphor, ylang-ylang, wild-lime. Yet for all the wild beauty and scent-burdened air, Brent knew that the gorgeous growths were the

lurking places of reptiles and that the very scented sweetness sometimes spelt poison.

There existed in his mind no doubt that his were not the first human feet to tread these wilds. All along the pathway were strewn bits of excelsior and newspapers, sawdust, burnt matches and cigarette stumps. Idly musing he picked up one of the used paper-tubes, halting the party.

"I make that out to be Japanese," he meditated aloud. "It's the 'Peacock' brand, and you'll find it in every *shoji* in Japan."

"It's a rotten cigarette, too," commented Hopworth Dreen. "Well, what are you stopping for, Brent?"

"I was just wondering," answered Brent, as one in a daze, "what Japanese were doing this far south—that's all."

"Well, go ahead and do your wondering while we walk."

Brent complied, hardly noting the offensive tone. A little farther on he picked up a used cartridge shell which had upon its base the mark of the Tokio Gun Factory. He passed the shell back to Ochs.

"Whoever are here are connected with the Japanese Government," he made remark. "That's the Government brand and it's only used in Government enterprises."

"Some warship pulled up for signal-shooting, I guess," hazarded Ochs, tossing the shell away.

"Good Lord! are we ever going to get to the top of this hill? I feel like a plugged Mexican dollar. Get a move on, Brent!"

Abstractedly Brent parted the bushes before him, and the second of his disappearance from view was coincident with his startled exclamation. The others drew back, wondering as to what his cry indicated, but were soon put at their ease by his supplementary shout:

"Come on, you people. Here's a house!"

They followed him through the bushes and found they had reached the crest of the hill. Before them, in the centre of a circle of palm-trees, was a very complete bungalow, built after the most approved East Indian fashion, shingled, with a wide veranda, Queen Anne pillars, a brick chimney and a weather-vane, diamond-paned windows and heavy iron-barred door. Trees and bushes had been ruthlessly made away with to provide a garden for the house, and here grew more orchids and other growths, neatly laid out in beds, around which circled graveled walks. But for all of the civilizing adjuncts the house had the appearance of desolation. Through the palms to the back the roofs of other buildings were in evidence.

"Why, it's a regular village," commented Hyman.

"Must be peopled by spirits, though," added Pursey Ochs. "Look at that house all shut up,

barred door, barred windows. It doesn't look very cosy-cornery, does it?"

"It looks like it's just been built," was Dorothy's contribution. "I don't believe anybody's ever lived in it, myself. Look how fresh the paint is."

"Best thing is to find out," was Brent's opinion. He crossed the garden-beds and graveled walks, ascended the steps and walked the veranda's length, peering about him. There was no sign of human habitation, but still hoping he pressed the button at the side of the door. The others had joined him on the porch, and they heard the dull buzzing of an electric bell, a buzzing that echoed for near half a minute. All five held their breath, their eyes intent on the door, but it did not open, and there was no response from within to indicate that the bell had been heard.

Again Brent rang the bell, keeping his finger upon the button for more than the general brief space. Again the wait, and still there was no break of the silence within. Brent, angered, seized the brass knob to rattle it; it turned and the door opened. The five stood gaping.

"Well," said Brent, recovering himself, "the door stands open, and——"

"It's a pretty cheeky thing to go in without by your leave," remarked Dreen, ever keen to oppose his rival. His words had the effect of deciding Brent, and he bowed to Dorothy.

"*Entrez, mademoiselle,*" he said, with a mock flourish.

"Had we better?" she asked, timidly.

He nodded and the girl crossed the threshold. The others followed her. The late afternoon sunlight trickling through the shading palms cast a greenish-golden light into the place, which proved to be a species of reception hall, with a bricked fireplace in the centre.

"Small use for that," said Pursey Ochs, pointing.

The hall was furnished in light wood, straight-backed rattans, two bamboo rockers, some lounging chairs of willow-work. A combination writing-desk and bookcase stood in one corner. A long teak table was piled with new books, magazines and papers. Brent picked up some of the volumes, glancing at the first blank page of each in hope of finding some clue as to the identity of the bungalow's occupants, but there were no names written there. He noted curiously the diversity of the selection. There were two books on military tactics in Spanish, three in German, some De Maupassant volumes in the original French, José Rizal's "El Filibusterismo," beloved by all the disciples of Katipunan. Paradox of paradoxes!—an English edition of Harrison Ainsworth's most startling effort, "The Lancashire Witches," kept it company. Of the many periodicals, Brent's eyes fell upon a number of familiar names—the

Paris *Figaro, La Reina* and *Matador,* of Madrid, some of the Tokyo sheets in Japanese, the *Kladdersdatch,* of Berlin, the Washington *Army and Navy Journal,* the Manila *Renacimiento,* some illustrated English magazines, and American weeklies, so cosmopolitan a taste displayed that, far from throwing any light upon the identity of their unknowing hosts, it merely provoked wonderment.

When Brent looked up from his inspection of the journals he saw that Ochs, Dreen and Hyman had quitted the hall to explore other sections of the house, and only Dorothy remained. She stood by one of the windows reading what appeared to be a letter, the flush of excitement staining her cheeks pink, the sunlight on her masses of loose yellow hair seeming to light up the whole room. His eyes seemed chained to the sight of her, the curves of her form, accentuated as they were by her clinging bathing suit, the pure outlines of her neck and throat, her round bare arms. Briefly, he stood as one entranced. An impellation to make her realize how precious he held her came over him; his eyes grew strangely tender. He moved in her direction. It was at that moment she turned and saw the expression of his eyes. She looked down, her lashes sweeping her cheek. In the silence that fell each believed the other could hear the throbbing of their hearts.

But when she raised her eyes there was no

trace of coquetry in them, for they had fallen again on the envelope she held and had become again troubled.

"You remember that man you said was a half-caste—and some other things—and who kept trying all the time to speak to me—you know the man who left at Hong-Kong? Es-pe-ra-so?" She pronounced the name carefully.

Brent nodded carelessly. "Suppose we go and forage with the others," he suggested, not noting the letter she held in her hands. But now she held it out to him.

"And the other two men we saw with him in Hong-Kong—the red-haired one and the little one who looked so much like a girl? You said they were three members of something or the other—something to do with the Philippines. And that there were more of them—and—oh, I don't remember exactly, but——"

He took the letter, his mind on other things, and hardly conceiving her words might have a relevancy.

"What has that got to do——" he began.

"That's a letter," she stated, "addressed to that Esperaso man and also to the red-haired one—you said his name was Orto or something—and the little one, Charles Carr Conkling—you see how well I remember names—and three others. I suppose——"

His eyes mirrored the superscription of the envelope. He bent his head in amazed scrutiny.

"I found it on the mantel there." She pointed to the slab above the fireplace. He followed the direction of her nod, stared at her unseeingly, and crumpled the envelope in his hands. Mechanically he straightened out the creases and examined it. It was plain white vellum, and the writing seemed to be that of a hand more accustomed to tracing ideographs, for each letter was formed separately and as though drawn, presenting a cramped, copy-book appearance. It was sealed with green wax, stamped with a round circle.

"This," he muttered, his eyebrows drawn close until a straight line of hair formed across. "This——"

"Oh!" said the girl, startled, as the door to the rear was thrown open and she looked upon the sight of three men in white drill uniforms. "Oh! Oh!" She shrank close to Brent, catching his hand, and temporarily diverting his attention from the envelope. An action of relinquishment followed almost immediately, as she laughed and clapped her hands with a pretty childish gesture.

"Gracious! *how* you frightened me!" she said, speaking to the ones in white, who proved to be none other than Ochs, Dreen and Hyman. "We—I thought you were the house people come to turn us out. Where *did* you get those uniforms?"

"Upstairs," replied Dreen, swaggering for-

ward, fully conscious of the fact that his clothes vastly became him and that Brent, in his wet bathing suit, was in unfavorable contrast. "Upstairs there's a lot of uniforms and things. And say, you remember that fellow Esperaso—that half-nigger?——"

"Yes, we just found——"

"Well," continued Dreen, oblivious of her interruption, "his name is on the door of one of the bedrooms; but his clothes wouldn't fit any of us. I've got on the ones used by that fellow we saw with him in Hong-Kong—the one that has hair like mine. His name was on the door, anyhow——"

"Some fellow named Von Klingen owned the suit I'm wearing," broke in Ochs. "That's where we Teutons are related—in shape. Fits well, eh, Miss Dorothy?"

He turned, pivot-like, on his heel for Dorothy's inspection.

"Fine!" she said. "Oh, *isn't* this luck?"

"The Doc here," continued Dreen, claiming her attention again, "has got on Mr. Moses Goldenbaum's clothes—whoever he is. Wonder what Mose's nationality is?" He grinned with malicious intent, humming one of the popular ragtime ditties of a past day, "All Coons Look Alike to Me." "Guess Mose is a Jew, Doc. Have you got any Jewish blood?"

Hyman's face was red with passion. He was not over-fond of advertising his descent, for his

practice had taught him that in the minds of the ignorant still lingered that race-prejudice, a barbarous relic of the days of King Richard's dental operations.

"You know perfectly well I'm a Jew," he stormed, "and if you think I'm ashamed of it you'll find out you're wrong, you big hulking baby!" He hurled himself on Dreen without forethought, aiming a blow at his face. Dreen avoided him and stepped back. His arm, descending in a swinging stroke aimed for Hyman's face, was arrested by the grip of Brent's fingers, and Dreen himself was spun around.

"Cut it out, Dreen," said Brent. "You don't think we'll let you hit a man that much smaller than you are? You've got to stop handing out that brand of insult. Hyman, Dreen doesn't mean anything by it. He was only treating you to a specimen of what he thinks is humor. Here, you two, shake hands now and forget it."

Hopworth Dreen's better part asserting itself, he held out his hand to the surgeon. "I didn't mean anything, Hyman. Don't get sore."

Hyman took the hand, somewhat hesitatingly, and winced in the auburn-haired one's grasp. "All right," he said, freeing his fingers with haste. He was somewhat glad that he had been saved a battle royal with the possessor of so mighty a grip.

"But as for you, Brent," said Dreen, recol-

lecting his rival's dictatorial tone, "you needn't think you're running this shooting-match because——"

Dorothy broke in as peacemaker. "You look well in that uniform—what is it, Mr. Dreen? I mean what do those little gold things on the collar and epaulettes stand for?"

Brent studied Dreen's tunic as she spoke. It was of white drill, having a high collar attached, which hooked at the throat, and on which were fastened gold insignia, which closer inspection revealed as palm trees in miniature, with the monogram "R. F." twisted about them. These emblems were also on the red epaulettes, side by side with the parallel gold bars, indicating rank. Detachable red piping ran down the seams of the tunic, front and back, and formed an imitation cuff on each sleeve.

"It looks like the uniform of the Philippine Constabulary, but it isn't. Their letters are "P. C.," and their insignia is an eagle." Brent spoke as one puzzled.

There was a certain gravity on the face of the generally irrepressible Ochs. "I don't know what you make of it, Brent," said the newspaper man, "but this whole business looks queer to me. We've been all over the house. It's stocked up with all sorts of canned goods, whiskey, champagne, cigars, cigarettes, coffee, and about everything a man wants. There's even an ice chest. And back of the house there's

a refrigerating plant, full of ice and fresh meats. And besides that, there are three big buildings back of us, locked and absolutely empty. One looks like an arsenal, the other two look like barracks. We've been all over the house, even down the cellar, where the wine is, and there isn't the sign of *anybody*. Upstairs there are about ten bedrooms, with clean linen and uniforms of white and khaki, fitted up with all the toilet articles. Six of them have got the names of Esperaso and those side-kickers of his on them, and——"

Brent extended the letter to Ochs. "Miss Gordon found that on the mantel. Read those names and see if they are the same," he said, grimly.

Ochs looked, nodded, and handed back the envelope to Brent. "Ditto," he said. "Now, what the mischief is the matter?—and—and—"

"Why don't you open the letter and find out?" suggested Hyman, practically.

"Well"—Brent shrugged his shoulders—"it's addressed to them and it's sealed. But——"

He looked around, seeking their opinion. Ochs gave his bluntly:

"These people are scoundrels. They've done all they can to hurt the United States. We're all at sea. All's fair when your rival ain't square," he paraphrased.

"I guess Ochs is about right," said Brent,

fingering the letter while he awaited remarks from the others.

"Sure," agreed Dreen, his curiosity bettering his rivalry.

"I think so, too." Dorothy looked at Hyman. "Don't you, doctor?" The surgeon nodded.

"Here goes, then." As he spoke Brent slit the envelope with a thin steel paper-cutter which he had found on the table. He took out the folded sheet within, straightened out the creases, and bent his head over the communication, which was dated only two days previous to their landing. It was written in English, but the verbiage was curiously stilted—the English of a foreigner who has consulted a text-book in his composition. It began with a formal "To," after which followed the names of the six men to whom the letter was addressed, corresponding with the names on the envelope. Brent read them slowly, and with mechanical persistency re-read them aloud:

"To

The Señores: Don Bernardo Esperaso
Don Ambrosino de Araza y Tagliono, and
Don Leon Aorto,
Messrs. Charles Carr Conkling, and
Moses Goldenbaum
and
Herr Froehlich von Klingen.

Excellencies:

By command, the house, the arsenal and the barracks have been constructed. For what purpose, nor why, nor where does any man who built know. The arsenal contains ten thousand repeating rifles from the arsenal of Tokyo, with six hundred thousand rounds of ammunition for their efficacy, four Krupp cannon, four Maxim rapid-firing guns, Shimose powder and shells in quantities as by requisition, canned stores, ten thousand uniforms for privates and several hundred for officers.

Please check stores as by the correctness of requisition, which is with this enclosed.

I am directed to inform you, should you arrive on the island before meeting Señor Don Esperaso, that a ship, formerly of the Maru line, has been armored and will to the south be sent from Nagasaki, here to join you, and to command a Captain Arundsen. Five hundred men, thought to be passengers, will she carry, but recruits they are to be for your cause.

Having the honor to call myself your servant, I sign myself, by strict command, only as

EL AMIGO DE LOS ISLAS FILIPINAS."

The paper fell from Brent's hand. He stumbled, nearly losing his balance, and put his hand to his eyes. The others, with the exception of Ochs, were still regarding him in a puzzled way.

"Good God!" he exploded. "Do you realize

what that means, do you, do you? 'A Friend of the Philippines'—he didn't dare to sign his damned Japanese name—and why?—and why? Because he's an official of the Japanese Government, that's why! You, Ochs, do you realize what this letter means?"

"I've got a blame good guess," was the sententious reply.

"Tell them, then," said Brent, wearily.

"Well," began the fluent one, a little hesitant at the thought of the magnitude of the explanation and groping for words, "these disreputable gentlemen in Hong-Kong have been raising trouble in the Philippines for a long time. Von Klingen and Greenbaum represent a German company of railroad and steamship promoters who want to corral the commerce out here and take it away from the United States and England. The three Filipinos are in it for the governmental graft that'll come to them when they're at the head of the Philippine republic. This sissy—Conkling—is in it because he's a natural double-dyed traitor and renegade, and——"

"But what's the game?" asked Dreen, impatiently.

"Jumping Jerusalem! Ain't it as plain as your face? They want to chase the Americans out of the Philippines and set up one of those rapid-gun-fire republics, with dictators and quadrennial revolutions. Well, they've been playing the game a long time. Now it looks like

they've drawn a full house. Opponent being quite unaware of the extremely good hand they're holding, is doing a 'Rip Van Winkle,' at the expiration of which the chances will be said opponent will be a forlorn hope, with deuce and treys, and the Katipunan copping the kitty——"

"Cut out the poker-stuff. The thing's mystifying enough to them without it. We're down to hardpan. Look here"—Brent's chest expanded as he breathed deeply, his grey eyes narrowed—"I've always said Japan was only waiting a chance to play us false with the Philippines—or anything else, but I didn't know it was coming so soon. *And we're the only ones that know.* We've stumbled onto one of the biggest conspiracies of the century—stumbled on it. It's all plain enough to one who's studied the Far Eastern question. And I have—and I know."

His words carried conviction. To the breathless listeners he seemed to have taken on stature and breadth.

"There is to be an invasion of the Philippines. This island is to be its base. That arsenal contains arms to be used against the United States. *Furnished by Japan!* Bah! the yellow beasts!"

"I don't—exactly—understand," complained Schlauss Hyman.

"Then you're an ass," was Brent's uncompromising assertion. "Japan wants to extend

her island empire right along the coast of Asia. She wants the Philippines, but not badly enough to go to war for them. This Philippine Junta wants a republic. Japan backs the Junta. Suppose the republic gains a temporary triumph, and puts the United States to great losses. It's served its purpose with Japan. She goes to the United States with her hypocritical friendship and says: 'See here! these islands are no good to you. You sell them to us. We'll put down the revolt.' Public feeling is pretty strong about the Philippines. It's a political issue. The administration would be more than likely to accept Japan's offer. Japan would send down her army, wipe the insurrectionists off the map, and proceed to Japanize the islands. She's done that sort of thing before. That's the kind of a nation she is!"

Dorothy watched him wonderingly. Where was the languid, nonchalant passenger of the *Sultana* in this hard-eyed, jutting-jawed man who spoke? As he paused, out of breath, her blue eyes were glowing, a high color was in her cheeks, her hands were clasped.

"All conjecture, you say?" he continued. "But see how craftily she's played her hand. She sends the arms down here direct, builds and clears out. Esperaso joins his brother-conspirators in Hong-Kong. They will come here on some private boat without arms, provisions, anything—a harmless pleasure trip. That

fools the United States detectives who shadow them. The other ship spoken of in the letter comes down from Nagasaki with five hundred white mercenaries. They whip them into shape here. They'll risk anything for loot. Start a full-fledged revolution in the Philippines with this five hundred, and the promise of arms, and every little brown devil will be up. I haven't a doubt the Constabulary will desert; they can't be trusted. With their Government arms, then ten thousand rifles in that arsenal, and more that the ship will bring, what chance have our few regiments against them? There aren't ten thousand soldiers, all told, in the Philippines, and they're widely scattered. You see that 'R. F.' on your collars, you with the uniforms? *I know what it means now*—it means 'Republica Filipinas,' and the words will be a real entity a month from now if this scheme is carried out, with the United States six thousand miles away from the seat of war. The islands have been ripe for a big insurrection for a long time. They lacked money and competent officers. They've got both now. There's no chance of the insurrection failing unless——"

"Unless?" whispered the girl, her face uplifted as one who hears a battle-cry from afar.

"Unless we take a hand to prevent it. Here we are—five of us; all good Americans, I hope. Blown here by accident, maybe by Providence, *quien sabe*? And I, for one, intend that the

arms in that arsenal''—he pointed to the rear—''shall never reach the Philippines—shall never be used against our country. And, if possible, the ship, too.''

''Yes!'' came in Dorothy Gordon's clear treble, her face aglow. ''Yes,'' too, from Schlauss Hyman.

Pursey Ochs looked at Brent with a smile that was somewhat ironic. ''Granting, of course, my dear boy, that what you've outlined is straight, don't you think we've bitten off a little more than we can chew? How in the mischief can four men and a woman prevent anything?''

''I think it's all silly rot myself,'' announced Hopworth K. Dreen, simulating a disdain which he did not feel. ''You've got a great imagination, Brent. You ought to write fiction.''

Dorothy flushed angrily and cast toward Dreen a look which, had it been seen by him, would not have been appreciated. But on Brent the remark acted as cold water on a heated body, and his sudden feverish excitement leaving him, he looked somewhat shamefaced, after the manner of all Anglo-Saxons, their aftermath to a show of emotion.

''Well,'' he said, brusquely, ''we'll see what comes. Meanwhile I'll get into some dry clothes. You'd better do it, too, Miss Gordon.''

''There aren't any women's clothes,'' was Dreen's remark.

"Well, I ought to be able to wear Mr. Charles Carr Conkling's. I'm as big as he is. It's men's clothes or a wet bathing suit, and——" She smiled and scampered up the stairway, Brent following her.

CHAPTER VIII

JOHN BAULDWIN BRENT

As Dorothy had surmised, Charles Carr Conkling proved, by his garments, to have an extremely small waist, so when she had slipped into his underwear, tunic and trousers she found herself tolerably well fitted. It would have been expecting more than coincidence generally affords to discover that the half-hose and shoes would correspond to her size. But the pedal trappings were of canvas, and by lacing them tightly and tying the strings around her ankle, she found that they would hold fast.

She laughed as, by the light of two candles, she saw her image reflected from the dressing-table mirror, and parted her yellow hair in the centre, combing it smoothly back from her brow, *à la* Cleo Merode. She wound it into a knot at the back of her head, the front view of her thus presenting the spectacle of a very good-looking boy of seventeen or eighteen years.

Before she descended the stairs she rummaged the various rooms for a medicine-chest, and discovered one in the lavatory. Some cold

cream and bandages were forthcoming, and with these in hand she sought her companions. The gleam of a light in the rear attracted her attention, and she went toward it to find Brent, Ochs and Hyman in the big, tiled kitchen. Brent was also in uniform now, and was performing the feat of opening a tin of pressed beef with a carving knife. Ochs, kneeling before the stove, wrapping paper under him to prevent soiling the knees of his white trousers, was coaxing some wood into a blaze, adding to it, stick by stick, from a freshly-cut pile in the wood-box.

"*Hel-lo!*" exclaimed the fire-lighter, looking up as the patter of her feet reached his ears. He swung clear around, and sat down on the paper, staring at her with a broad grin.

"'A pretty girl, a summer night,
A moon and all is well—oh!'"

He sang. "Behold the triumphant entrance of Miss Wedna Dallace Opper! Give the lady —the gentleman, I mean—a cigarette and she'll sit on the table and sing us the Crown Prince's song. You do that in 'Wang,' every night, don't you, Miss Dopper?"

"Put some more wood on the fire," warned Brent. "I say, you make a stunning boy, Miss Dorothy. We're trying to get some dinner. Won't you join us?"

"Can you cook?" was the added question of Schlauss Hyman, who had drilled a hole in a can of tomatoes by means of a corkscrew and was now pouring the red fluid into a dish.

"Not very well," she admitted shamefacedly. "But I can make some good coffee. Let me try."

Hyman drained the tomato-can and threw it into the wood-box. In pursuance of her request he put a scoopful of the brown berries into the nickel grinding machine, and set about pulverizing them with great determination. Pursey Ochs arose from the floor, dusted off his trousers and contemplated with some pride and many heaves of exhaustion the crackling, sputtering blaze which he had evoked.

"I can cook," said Brent.

"But we're not going to let you," she objected with spirit. She produced the cold cream and bandages from behind her back and put them on the table near the doctor. "Is he, Dr. Hyman? His poor hand is simply torn to bits, and I want you to bind it up for him. And if I can't cook well enough we'll have a cold supper —so there!"

She took the coffee-grinder from Hyman and continued the pulverizing exercise. Hyman gently removed the pressed beef and carving knife from Brent.

"Nonsense!" protested the patient. "Nonsense!"

"It's not!" said the girl. "Your hand is awful!"

"Nonsense!" he said again, but became weakly submissive to the ministration of Hyman, who was skillfully applying the cold cream to the lacerated surface. "It's mighty good of you, though, to think about it."

"Good!" she echoed, "when you saved my life, and——"

"Oh, rot!"

Ochs looked at the girl with open admiration. "He ought to be glad he had the chance. I wish I had, but I was on the other side of the boat."

But Dorothy was not in the mood to have Brent's exploit depreciated. "It wouldn't have done any good, Mr. Ochs, even if you had had the chance," she echoed, "because you couldn't have, you know. You're not strong enough to hold on with one hand and support me and yourself with the other."

"Stung!" admitted Ochs, genially.

"Oh! don't make so much of it, Miss Dorothy!" growled Brent. "In all decency a man couldn't have done less. It wasn't a question of strength."

"I should say not," put in Dreen, from where he lounged in the doorway. "It was easy enough to do."

"I noticed you took *your* hand *away,*" said the girl, turning to him with a sudden acidity in

her tone. Schlauss Hyman laughed, intentionally irritating. Pursey Ochs grinned.

"Well, what if I did?" demanded Dreen, hotly. "I knew you were strong enough to hold on by yourself, and I didn't take it away, anyhow. Brent wrenched it loose when he grabbed you from the other side and——"

"Oh, let it drop!" growled Brent. Too much palaver. Hurry up there, Hyman."

The doctor, however, all placidity, hummed a tune and adjusted the lint bandages with studied care. Brent turned to Dreen.

"Well, well! Isn't there anything you can do? Here we are, getting things ready to eat, and you haven't lifted your hand. If you expect to eat you've got to work, Dreen. Let that be understood."

There was an angry look in Dreen's eyes as he came forward, squared his shoulders, and, with a side glance at Dorothy, faced Brent.

"And also let it be understood, first, last and all the time, that I'll take no orders from you, Brent. Is that settled in your mind?"

"Not by any manner of means," responded Brent, turning to the tin of beef as Hyman released his hand. He began to slice the canned meat and deposited the slices on a plate which he took from the cupboard. "Not by any manner of means," he repeated, after a short pause. "We'll settle a good many things after we've

eaten—that among them. Until then you can help or not, just as you choose."

Dorothy turned one eye from the boiling coffee to glance at Dreen. "I hope you're not going to make any trouble?" she said, coldly.

Dreen flushed. "Trouble! I'm not making trouble, but if anybody's looking for trouble I guess I can give them a full order. I just won't have Brent domineering over me. The rest of you let him sit on you, but I'll be hanged if I do, and——"

"We'll settle that after we've eaten." There was something akin to a threat in Brent's tone. Dreen, with a derisive remark, stuck his hands in his coat pockets, laughed insultingly and stalked out of the room.

The castaways were very hungry, and it was a question of food far more than the way in which it was prepared. So the culinary end was omitted save for the making of the coffee, and Brent spread a white linen cloth on the dining-room table and garnished it with plates, knives, forks, cups and spoons. The discovery had been made that there was no butter, but a jar of honey was adjudged a satisfying substitute, and this Brent opened and placed in the centre of the table. A while before Schlauss Hyman had stumbled about in the darkness outside, fearful of snakes and creeping things, but striving to appear sublimely unconscious of the fact, and had, as a result of his labors, discov-

ered a spring-house and a well, the water from which had served to make the coffee and fill the water carafe, which the surgeon now brought in and from which he filled the glasses. Ochs followed him with a platter of cold pressed beef and toasted Saratoga chips, returning to fetch a tin of biscuits. Dorothy brought up the rear with the nickel-plated coffee pot, which exuded an aromatic odor, tantalizing the hungry adventurers.

All four washed hands and stood waiting for Dreen, who had been apprised of the completion of the preparations by sounding shouts from the starving Ochs. The Yale man presently appeared and eyed the tableau: Dorothy at the head of the table, Brent and Ochs on either side of her, Hyman beside the newspaper man. Four candles burned in a silver-plated candelabra, and lighted the table. Dreen's gaze was contemptuous as it rested on the food.

"Thought from the time you took you were going to have something wonderful," he made remark, unpleasantly.

"Maybe we could have had if you'd given us your valuable co-operation," was the courteous retort of Pursey Ochs. "As it was, we had to struggle along as best we could."

Dreen was plainly a victim of what in a woman would be denominated as a case of sulks, and his attitude served to dampen the spirits of the other members of the party. He complained

of the lack of bread, hot food and butter, and took the absence of vegetables as a personal affront. Hyman, raising his eyebrows in a scornful glance, indicated the tomatoes.

"That red ink! Pooh! I mean something solid." Nevertheless he helped himself to a goodly portion of them, scolding the while.

"You," said Pursey Ochs, with a wave of his stubby hand, "are making a triple-plated, seventeen-boiler-expansion, twenty-three horsepower ass out of yourself, Kosciusko."

"You mind your own business!" shouted Dreen, fiercely.

"Unfortunately I'm linked in business with a whangdoodle named H. Kosciusko Dreen, so that's what I'm doing," responded Ochs, smiling with rare sweetness. "All of which reminds me of a certain red-haired cub reporter who once honored the *Daily Star* by allowing us to put a certain sum of money opposite his name on the pay-roll each week. His name wasn't Hopworth, neither was it Kosciusko, nor yet was it Dreen; but in other matters, such as lordly egotism, calm condescension and blatant bumptiousness, not to speak of his Titian locks, he resembled our dearly beloved young companion whose cherubic face brightens our festive board. Well, this——"

Dreen banged his fist on the table. "You cut that out, Ochs, or I'll——"

"You'll cut *that* out, Dreen. You'll remem-

ber we are at the table and that Miss Gordon is with us, and if you choose to act like a butcher-boy, out you go."

Brent was on his feet also, and the two men glared each into the eyes of the other, each with his fists clenched.

"Is *that* so?" inquired Dreen, his ugliest look upon him. "Well, I'm from Missouri, see? It takes a bigger man than you to show me the way to go home. So if——"

"I think we'd better settle that matter when Miss Gordon isn't here," said Brent, evenly.

From the girl came a prompt negative. "I'm one of you, even if I am a girl. And if I'm to have any vote in the matter I think Mr. Dreen should be reprimanded by all of us. His conduct is positively disgraceful. If I were elsewhere I'd simply keep out of his way. Being together here, we have to accept him, but we *don't* have to accept his manners, and——"

"But, Miss Dorothy," stuttered Dreen, somewhat crestfallen, "I didn't——"

Brent took up the conversation. "I suppose it *has* got to be settled, this question of leadership. I guess I've unconsciously taken the lead and given orders. Well, somebody has to do that—a party must have a leader. We've got a pretty black future to face here—according to that letter—and we've got to organize and plan. So somebody's got to be responsible for orders being carried out, and the man who's the best

in that particular field ought to be chosen. Now, Hyman, outside of surgery, you're not a practical man; giving over newspaper work, neither are you, Ochs. Dreen here has made a name only as a football player and a liberal spender of his father's money——"

Dreen stepped forward, but a glance from Dorothy quieted him for a moment.

"So I'm the only other man. And I've been a soldier and an explorer, and I know something of what we're up against. Also, I think I'm physically the strongest of the lot. As the matter's been precipitated, I nominate myself as your leader and request a seconding."

"I second it," voted Dorothy, promptly, visions of elections in the Hunt Club recurring to her. "All in favor say 'aye.' "

Hyman and Ochs eyed one another, then looked at Dorothy to find she was watching them expectantly.

"Aye," said Hyman.

"Aye," repeated Ochs, although the tone betokened a mental reservation.

Dreen's chair grated along the floor as he kicked it backward. The eyes of the others were upon him.

"Do you vote 'aye,' Dreen?" asked Ochs, with a grin.

"Well, *not much!*" shouted Hopworth K. Dreen. "Not much. Not by a whole lot."

"There's only one thing to do, then," said

Brent, quietly. "The rest have chosen me. The majority wins. So you've got to accept me. If you refuse——"

"I *do* refuse," growled Dreen.

"The question then resolves itself into which of us two is the physical superior. I suppose, if I thrash you, you'll acknowledge me as the leader?"

Contrasting them as they stood facing one another, it would seem that Dreen had decidedly the better of it from the standpoint of brute strength. Brent was a good two inches less in height, and his shoulders lacked much of the other's broadness, yet there was a settled sternness, a confident determination about the set of his lips, the angle of his jaw and the glint in his cold grey eyes, which the sullen obstinacy of Dreen's face did not match.

Dreen was surveying the other carefully now, beginning at the points of Brent's canvas shoes and ending at his eyes, back again to the shoes and up again. His mouth twisted into a sneer, and he laughed boisterously.

"Say, that's a good one, Brent. *You* lick me! Why, it's as safe as a policeman stealing apples." He became again convulsed with ironical mirth. "But," he said, with a mock deferential bow, "whenever you feel you would like to *be* licked, happy to oblige you, I'm sure."

"You can oblige me right now," was Brent's curt reply. He took one of the candles from its

sconce. "We'll go into the reception hall. The rest of you wait here. I won't be long."

"You bet you won't!" confirmed Dreen.

But Dorothy had taken hold of Brent's sleeve. "You can't fight with your hand in that condition," she whispered. "You can't and you mustn't."

Brent gently released the grasp of the little fingers. "It's awfully good of you to think of that," he said, "but don't you worry about *me;* I'll be all right. I don't fight with the palm of my hand, you know. That makes no difference in a man's hitting capacity. Come on, Dreen!"

Dreen had taken a candle from the table, and at Brent's words passed out into the hall. When Dorothy would have followed, Brent stepped back, holding up his hand.

"Fights with fists are brutal things," he said. "You'd better not see it. I don't care to watch them myself."

"By the way," broke in Dreen, "if I lick you I'm to be the leader, eh?"

"Right you are," agreed Brent, cheerfully. "But what's the use of discussing impossibilities."

He closed the door, and the three in the room heard their tread as the two combatants passed on towards the reception hall. Dorothy, her face pale, looked at Ochs and Hyman helplessly, then her breasts heaved and her lips trembled

and tear-drops glistened in the corners of her eyes.

"It's—it's so unnecessary," she quavered, "when there are only five of us. Oh, it is perfectly hateful in that Dreen man! And poor Mr. Brent's hand so cut up! Oh, I hate you!" She turned upon them fiercely.

"It isn't our fault," Pursey Ochs reminded her. "In a situation like this a gentleman is forced to demonstrate his physical superiority. The obstreperous get it in the medulla oblongata——"

He suddenly paused, noting Hyman's grin.

"Might I ask," he queried with studied politeness, "the wherefore of this sudden mirth?"

"I was just remembering the conversation we had about that book, 'The Wild Places,' you remember, just before we came to Nagasaki? You said a man who lives in this age has no need for physical strength; that he can hire burly stevedores to do his fighting for him; that——"

"Yes—*that,*" broke in Ochs, with some asperity, "but that referred to far different conditions, and——"

The girl shivered as the sound of something heavy striking the floor came to them dully.

"Oh, oh!" Her head was on the table and she was sobbing now. "Go in and stop them, please! Mr. Dreen is so much the bigger—and Mr. Brent's hand—oh!" She lifted tear-dimmed

eyes in pleading. "Oh, please, Mr. Ochs, please, please!"

Schlauss Hyman, who had been studying the tablecloth with wrinkled brows, looked up, smiling inscrutably. He put one hand on Dorothy's, patting it in that peculiar soothing way which the true physician has ever.

"There! Miss Dorothy," he said, "Mr. Brent's not going to be hurt, and Mr. Dreen will be taught a very satisfying lesson. You take that from me. I *know*."

He leaned back in his chair, tugging at his pointed beard, and still with his inscrutable smile.

"What do you mean?" asked the girl, dabbing at her eyes.

"Well, I promised Brent not to tell, but I suppose it might as well come out now as any time. I attended Brent some years ago when I was a contract surgeon in the United States Army, and when we met on the *Sultana* I recognized him immediately. He asked me not to say anything about it, and I promised I wouldn't, but——"

"Well—well—well!" cried the girl, resentfully.

"Well, it's just this: The whole lot of you must have been blind not to have recognized a man that everybody knows about. Why, this man's done almost everything. He's soldiered in China, in Cuba, in the Soudan; been lost in

the ice trying to find the Pole, and—well, haven't you two heard of Bauldwin Brent, author and general daredevil, revolutionist, explorer, duelist——?"

The girl stared open-mouthed. "Bauldwin Brent! *The* Bauldwin Brent! Why——"

"Well, that's the man who's fighting Dreen now. Poor Dreen, that's what I say. Why, this fellow's made out of steel. He's as tough and hard as a hickory-nut. And you let his lackadaisical airs deceive you!" Schlauss Hyman laughed loudly.

"But, no!" gasped the girl. "It can't be—Mr. Brent's name is John. He told me so. He said that Bauldwin Brent was a relative, and he said *his* name was John."

"So it is," answered Hyman. "John Bauldwin Brent."

"But—but—his age. Why, Bauldwin Brent must be thirty-five. Mr. Brent isn't that by ten years."

"He's thirty-three. He looks younger. But——"

He looked up. Brent was framed in the doorway. "Hello, Brent," said Hyman, inspecting him. The much-discussed man was breathing audibly, but his appearance was in no way disordered, nor had he a scratch or bruise upon him.

"I've told them who you are," Hyman in-

formed him. "I didn't think that promise held here. And—how's Dreen?"

"You'd better have a look at him, Hyman," was the answer. "I think he's only stunned a bit. I tried not to mark him in any way."

As the surgeon left the room Brent came forward, and picking up his coffee cup, drained it. His eyes averted from Dorothy, he selected a cigarette from a box which Ochs had unearthed from among the supplies. With infinite care he rolled it and tapped it against the side of his cup.

"Look here," said Ochs. "Hyman tells us you're that famous gentleman, Bauldwin Brent. You're not required to incriminate yourself, but the court will appreciate an answer unflavored with perjury."

"Well?" inquired Brent, with a trace of uneasiness.

"Oh, it's well enough as it is! But I want to know. Mere vulgar curiosity, that's all. And Miss Gordon here"—he bowed—"seems also interested."

The girl advanced a step and Brent met her gaze. "Are—are you Bauldwin Brent?" she asked unsteadily.

Brent nodded and lit the cigarette.

"The author of *Sir Raoul, The Rhone, The*——"

"Yes," said Brent, "I'm Bauldwin Brent. I —well, I'd rather you people hadn't known, es-

pecially you, Miss Dorothy. People who've heard of me always expect me to do such queer, unheard-of things; to be monstrously clever; to—in short, to play the part. And I'm just an ordinary sort of a fellow, just like most other men I know."

"What extraordinary men you must know!" she said, her voice low, her eyes shining. "What——"

"Oh, please! Not that sort of thing, please! We've been frank with one another before. I'm sorry I deceived you, but really I was tired of having people expect great things of me, and be disappointed because I don't wear a Byronic collar with a flaring bow of silk tied in it, or come to dinner in a flannel shirt, or—— Can't you understand how tired a man gets of having people watch him expectantly, as though he were a monkey on a stick or a wild beast in a cage, or——" He paused, rather at a loss for words. "Anyhow, since it's out, forgive me, won't you?"

"Why?" asked the girl, her hands clasped.

He moved nearer her and his eyes seemed to reflect the light that shone in hers. Pursey Ochs slid out of the room, his canvas shoes making no noise. He was a wise man, and knew the flame of love in woman's eyes; knew also that flame in Dorothy's was for some one quite other than the editor of the *Daily Star*. So he went

out, leaving only a third party in the room—a naked cherub, quiver-girded.

"Don't be cruel, don't be stupid,
To that silent couple; Cupid
Is the only number three who's not *de trop,*"

he hummed, as he sought out Dreen, to discover the extent of his injuries and the effect of Hyman's ministrations.

"But I'm glad," said Dorothy, her eyes downcast, her demeanor non-resisting. "I'm glad—very glad—that you didn't tell me, because I—I might have been a little—in awe of you. You'd done so much, and—I've read all your books, and they're splendid, splendid! And you—you were my hero—one of my heroes."

She looked up at him, shyly inviting, her attitude deliberately conceived in a sudden sweep of abandon, brought on by her sheer admiration of the man. She was leading him on, for she suddenly desired to tell him that she loved him. Whether he loved her or not, she wanted him to *tell* her that he did, so she might pour out to him her longing for him, her blind adoration. For this was the sort of love that asks nothing in return—a love conceived on a great scale for an ideal man, long cherished in solitude, finding expression at last for a tangible being. It seemed inconceivable to her at the moment that

he could care for her, a little, yellow-haired, blue-eyed slip of a girl who adored him. The thought did not come to her that she was aught but momentarily attractive to him, an agreeable means of whiling away idle time. He might have held her in his arms then and there, kissed her, and told her he cared; then, in due time, passed from her life, dismissing her with a careless gesture. But she wanted him to tell her, even though it was but momentary; wanted to carry through life the remembrance that once this hero of hers had held her in his arms and kissed her on the lips.

"I—I've always hoped I'd—I'd—see you some day," she murmured. Her hand fluttered toward him. He caught it in his own, his almost prehensile fingers bruising it in a convulsive grip. He hurt her, hurt her cruelly; but she found a certain fierce joy in her pain. He glimpsed her eyes at the moment and drew back with a deep intake of the breath. It came to him that his desire for her had overmastered him to forgetting that while this girl was among them they were her protectors.

"Why—" Her eyes reproached him as he released her hand. He stood tense, his good resolves melting away, for his eyes were still upon her, and those eyes bade him do what he willed.

Perhaps it was fortunate that Dreen, slightly supported on either side by Ochs and Hyman, entered at that moment, and the spell was

broken, the two starting suddenly as though they had been in a world other than their own. Both looked toward Dreen, who, though rather pale, was smiling boyishly, and who, pushing away Ochs and Hyman, came up to Brent.

"Look here, Brent," he said, thrusting out his palm, "these people have told me you're Bauldwin Brent. I've read *Sir Raoul.* I think it's bully. And you did for me, old man; did me up, for fair. You could have punched me into a jelly, but you let me off. And, say! I'm grateful, all right—and I'm sorry I stirred up trouble. Say, I'm awfully sorry. Shake, won't you?"

"Sure," said Brent, genially, slapping the other's palm a resounding thwack with his uninjured hand, and closing his fingers on it in a hearty grip. "I'm sorry I spoke so sharply, too. I guess you'll have to excuse me. I was all worked up about this business here. And—"

"No excuses from you," insisted Dreen. "I was to blame." He turned to the girl. "Miss Dorothy, can you forgive a chap for being rotten?"

Few women hold against a man the fact that they are prompted to violence through caring for them, and Dorothy smiled away Dreen's apologies, although, had he known it, his worst offense had been entering at the time he did, a few moments before. But this Dreen did not know.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARSENAL IS MINED

Sleep claimed the tired persons of all save Brent a very short time after they had drawn the sheets over them that night and become conscious of feeling very clean and comfortable in the pongee silk pajamas which had been intended for their enemies of the Junta. Before they had assumed reclining positions for more than fifteen minutes, four of the castaways were soundly asleep.

But to Brent the night came as a silent vigil. He was as one with a weight upon him, the weight the ruler of a turbulent nation might feel. Two things battled for supremacy in his mind—how might he preserve Dorothy from harm? how manage to save his country from the conspiracy planned against it? To him was the responsibility for keeping those arms from the Philippines; to arrange that the mercenaries of Japan should never land on the islands of the United States. For should they land with the arms Japan had provided, it meant that thou-

sands of Americans would clasp hands with Death—and thank their God that they died cleanly—for others, worse than death. He had soldiered in the Philippines when America warred with the Katipunan. He knew what mercy Americans had to expect at the hands of victorious *insurrectos*. He had seen the mutilated remains of American soldiers when the brown manikins had wreaked their fiendish fancies upon them; bodies hacked and hewn, bodies buried to the neck in sand, their skulls alone remaining when the red ants trained upon them by the brown men had eaten their fill. Worse enormities even than that!—enormities the thoughts of which he put away from him, shuddering; ones unfit for the printed page and even for the thoughts of a decent man.

Against the hordes of the conspirators would stand but the scattered handfuls of American troops—scarce ten thousand in all. Little chance these; little chance, indeed. Brent was quite sure that the *Constabularios* would prove faithless, would desert to their brown confrères with their carbines, their ammunition, their training. In his writings he had opposed the organization of the colonial army, the teaching of brown men to fight American fashion, the training of a viper that it might sting its trainer all the more skillfully. With the aid of the *Constabularios* and the many thousand rifles that Japan provided, the islands might be swept

clear of Americans before a month's lapse—less than the time it would take to send even one transport with troops from San Francisco.

Alone, the man's mask fell from him—that mask of inflexibility, of carelessness, with which he deceived the world. He felt weak, powerless to cope with the situation confronting him, rebellious under the accidental responsibility for many thousand lives. His eyes grew round and staring as any child's, his lips lost their straight-line effect and were pursed into tired petulancy. His whole face had the appearance of a very weary boy.

"Oh, I don't know what to do!" he muttered over and over again, as he tossed about on his bed, wrestling with the problem. "I don't know what to do. I'm not big enough for the job. I'm not big enough and I don't know what to do."

But he was very tired and could not toss for long. Gradually, although no solution appeared, he grew quieter, and his thoughts reverted to Dorothy's face as he had seen it, just before Dreen came back to the dining-room. The blue eyes seemed the most beautiful in all the world; his chief desire to kiss those warm, red lips, to hold her in his arms, to——

"Dorothy," he murmured softly. "My Diana! No, not Diana. Hebe—or—oh, Dorothy dear! Oh, good Lord; what a damn plucky

kid—what a damn pretty, plucky kid! Oh, good Lord!"

And he kicked the sheets away from him, arose and lighted a cigarette. When he had smoked it he tossed it into the outside blackness, and presently fell asleep.

He awoke early, with the dawn light upon his face. Somehow his troubles seemed to have dissipated themselves in the morning's rays, for he was gay and whistled quite merrily. The breath of the ylang-ylang was wafted to his nostrils, the air sweet with the smells of early morning. Birds chirped, monkeys chattered, paroquets squawked, all amid the tropical luxuriance spread before his windows.

Slipping his feet into the grass slippers beneath his bed, Brent went into the hall, attired in his yellow pajamas, descended to the first floor and the kitchen. He had noted the night before that there was a little creek running north of the house and that on its banks there had been built a bath-house. It was to this he wended his way. He found it a frame structure, fitted up with two huge wooden tubs, which had faucets and pipes attached, one faucet marked "Hot," the boiler attached to its pipe signifying that the word could be made a verity by building a fire under the boiler. But for his matutinal plunge Brent preferred the cold water.

He retraced his steps to the house for the pur-

pose of procuring soap and towel. His object accomplished he passed by Ochs' door, remembering that gentleman had once boasted proudly that hot water constituted a civilized bath, and that he had bathed in none other for all the days of his life. Smiling, Brent entered Ochs' room and awakened the newspaper editor, not, however, without considerable exertion. His object explained, Ochs followed him downstairs, also carrying toilet aids and rubbing his eyes sleepily.

"Regular bath-room? Hot and cold water?" he wanted to know.

"Sure," was Brent's mendacious response.

When they entered the bath-house, Brent pointed to the faucet marked "Hot." "I will say for the Japs that they're cleanly little beggars," he remarked. "It was mighty decent of them to remember to build a bath-house."

He had turned on the water before leaving and his tub was now half-full. Into it he now went, dashing the water on his neck, chest and arms, and rubbing himself briskly with his soaped hands. Ochs watched him rather anxiously and turned on the "Hot" faucet, taking the word at its full value, and not realizing that the water was cold.

When Brent was out and rubbing himself into a fine glow, Pursey Ochs discarded pajamas and plunged into the tub. With the shock of the water, cold from the hills, there sprang to his

lips a shriek, the shriek of a man who has been wounded bitterly, who has been deceived, decoyed and betrayed. Simultaneous with the shriek was the leaping up of Ochs, his teeth chattering, his eyes big with pained surprise. Had he not observed the grin on Brent's face he would have, no doubt, left the tub, but he was a man of determination, who, while ever ready to lead the laugh at another's expense, liked not himself to be the means of provoking mirth. So, grimly subduing his chattering, he sat himself down, martyr-like, and with trembling hands imitated Brent in dashing the water over all parts of his person. Several times his fingers, numb with cold, lost the soap; once he was quite sure he had been attacked by a cramp; but when he finally stepped from the tub he had done what he had to do quite thoroughly. He rubbed himself dry, maintaining an appearance of dignity and casting oblique glances upon Brent.

"Ochs," said the explorer, "you're a brick. I didn't take my first cold-water bath half so calmly."

"Who said it was my first cold-water bath?" growled Pursey Ochs, resuming his pajamas. When he had returned to the house and gotten into his uniform he was surprised to find himself in a state of beatitude. He took a proffered cigarette from Brent and the fumes seemed to

go to his head. Together they went out to forage for fresh food.

They gathered some mangoes, bananas and a sort of grape-fruit (which Brent called "pumelo") for the morning meal, and when they returned to the house they found that same meal already prepared. Dorothy, Hyman and Dreen had, by their combined efforts, broiled bacon, made flannel-cakes and coffee. The fruit added to these appetizing articles, they had a most satisfying breakfast, each man declaring the cakes of a most superior sort, especially when garnished with plenty of honey. Dorothy, however, was sadly aware that their compliments of the cakes had in them something of personal feeling for her, the maker, quite a number of them, as she was well aware, having blackened surfaces and being not at all according to the ethics of one Miss Parloa.

Breakfast over, and the men leaning back in their chairs over cigars and cigarettes, the cheerful badinage ceased to circulate, and Brent became aware that he was expected to outline futurities. He started twice, stammered, then, his mind clearer as to what he was to say, gave them the fruits of his meditation of the night before.

"It's plain enough that these six men, Esperaso, Aorto, Araza, Goldenbaum, Conkling and Von Klingen, are to be expected here at any hour. It is to be presumed that they will come

in some sort of a small schooner, with only enough men to man her, probably Chinese. Of course, as we hold the house, they couldn't very well put us out in the face of our guns, but the island's large enough for two parties, and they can simply wait about in the woods until the ship comes from Japan. What we're to do then I haven't the slightest idea. But there's one thing that we can do, and the sooner we do it the better."

"What's that?" asked Dreen, bending forward.

"Mine the arsenal so we can blow it up from here whenever we get good and ready. That will prevent those arms and ammunition from ever reaching the Philippines."

"But," objected Schlauss Hyman, "if we blow up the arsenal and they come here and find it's blown up"—he spread out his palms—"that's the end of us, I guess."

Brent nodded. "You're right. But we don't have to blow it up until we find it necessary. We can simply mine it, attach a fuse with its end in a convenient place near the house, and as soon as we've played our last card, touch off the fuse. And the sooner we fix that mine the better. Don't all of you think so?"

There were four affirmatives, as Brent rose to his feet. "I found these in the desk," he said, dangling a bunch of small keys and two large iron ones before them, then slipping them back

in his pocket, "and so I guess we'd better inspect the arsenal and the barracks and then lay our mine. After we've done that we can settle the other matters—if there are any to settle."

When they left the table Hyman took a look at Brent's injured hand, and again dressed it with some medicinal salves he had found in the chest, binding it up with cotton lint. The surgeon, after completing this task, decided to remain behind with Dorothy to straighten up the house, while the other three set out for sterner work.

The arsenal and barracks were barely visible from the house, being built on the slopes of the island valley, the arsenal upon the near side, the barracks opposite. Employing some of the keys they entered the arsenal, and found things much as they expected—case after case of modern rifles, thousands of cartridge-boxes, packages of high explosives in asbestos wrappings, kegs of the dreaded Shimose powder, marked in huge red Japanese ideographs, indicating, according to Brent, that the uninitiated were to make use of extreme care in the handling. Four Maxim rapid-firing guns, in sections, were stowed away in packing of cotton and excelsior, their chubby brass noses seemingly complacent and appearing in no way deadly. The barrels of the Krupp cannon, also in sections, sprawled helplessly on their beds of straw, like great pieces of gas-piping. Great green chests, piled

one upon the other, proved on inspection to contain uniforms of khaki. For all its size, there was but little room to move about in the arsenal, most of the floor space being taken up with these various implementia and accoutrements of grim-faced war.

The barracks, next visited, contained nothing of uncommon interest. They were long, low buildings, with a space of some sixty yards between them, which had been denuded of its palms, bushes and vines, and which was evidently intended for a street, for sand from the beach had been strewn inches deep upon it and ground in with a heavy rolling machine. In every detail of the buildings was seen the minute care and accuracy of the Japanese workmen, and, save for the dust that had accumulated since the builder's leave-taking, all was beautifully clean.

The buildings were provided with cots of regulation army make, consisting of canvas stretched on a collapsible frame, supported by two crossed legs at each end, a blanket and sheet apiece to each cot, along with a comb, a piece of soap, two huck towels and a coarse scrubbing brush, two suits of clean fibre underwear and one pair of white cotton pajamas.

"There's no use in talking," commented Brent, with something like admiration, "the Japs are rotten morally, but physically they're the cleanest people in the world. They believe that cleanliness is a necessity, and godliness

isn't. Look at that outfit, for a common soldier-man, mind you!"

In each building was a huge cooking range, several smaller stoves for the same purpose, great wash-tubs and huge boilers for linen. Back of the first barracks were the soldiers' bath houses. In every respect the buildings were ready for occupancy.

"And now," said Brent, "to fix the arsenal."

He sent Dreen back to the house to fetch a can of kerosene which he had noted in the kitchen, and with Ochs re-entered the arsenal. Here, under Brent's supervision and with his assistance, Ochs lugged the kegs of Shimose powder into the centre of the place. One of these Brent broke open with an axe and they grouped the others around it. From a corner Brent produced a coil of light manila rope, which he unraveled. When Dreen returned they went outside and drenched the full length of the coil with kerosene. One end Brent thrust deep into the keg of Shimose powder, which had been opened, and placed upon it a box of what he took to be dynamite. They payed out the rope carefully, carrying it outdoors. Brent returned and fetched forth six rifles, ten revolvers, a plenitude of ammunition and other implementia that took his fancy, and for which he imagined they might have use.

Entrance to the arsenal had been gained by a very complicated mechanism, involving the use

of three or four keys, which made padlocks yield and doors relinquish their fastenings. This mechanism was carefully adjusted, and the arsenal made fast.

"Those doors will never be opened again," said Brent, grimly.

They carried the length of oiled rope with them, trailing it in the long grass so that it was hidden from sight; the other end of it they fastened to a dragon-tree shoot, just back of their bath-house, at which place they cleaned their hands of the powder grime and oil stains.

Coming back to the bungalow they found that it had been swept and put in order by Dorothy and her nimble assistant, Dr. Hyman, whose heads were ornamented with turbans made from towels. They were fanning themselves after their exertions, using the blue aprons about their waists for the purpose. Dorothy ran out laughing at the entrance of the three, while Hyman hastily denuded himself of both turban and apron and kicked them into a corner, not, however, before grins evoked by his appearance had appeared on the faces of the others.

"Well," he said, with some asperity, "if you've done as much work as we have, you've done well, that's all I've got to say. Why——" He launched into an epitome of his labors, and they told of theirs.

"The first one of us who sees the necessity is to apply the lighted match," said Brent, "but

it's only to be done when there's no possible chance of keeping the arms out of the Philippines in any other way. But I suppose we're all agreed that those arms shan't get there?"

There was solemn acquiescence on the faces of the others.

"And that, even though—well, no risk is too great to take—no sacrifice——" he blundered. Brent was ever afraid of making a florid figure of speech.

The others nodded. They understood that their lives were, after all, small things compared to a country's welfare.

"Well, *that's* off our minds!" Brent sighed relief. "Wonder what time it is, anyhow?"

"Well, that's a matter for guess-work, but there's our approximation of it." Hyman pointed to the mantel where stood a tall clock, which Dorothy had found among the stores, and set when she arose that morning. Brent and Dreen, taking measurements of the shadows and judging the position of the sun, amended her guess, and put the hands at ten minutes past ten.

"Who's a good shot in the crowd?" asked Brent.

Dreen adjudged himself worthy of that title.

"Better take a gun and try to shoot something for the next two meals, then," was Brent's remark. "As for Hyman and myself, we are going to make some sort of a tour of exploration

to see what this island's like. We mayn't be home for lunch, Miss Dorothy," as that young lady appeared, denuded of turban and apron, "and if we're not here by two o'clock, don't you wait for us. Ochs, you stay behind with Miss Dorothy. Dreen will go out and try to bag some game."

So the party broke up again.

Before making their tour of exploration Brent and Hyman had to patch up the ship's boat, which had been somewhat damaged in the storm. They had, fortunately, discovered some oars among the supplies, and the boat once fixed, they set off on their journey. They returned about six o'clock, when the sun was beginning to go low on the western horizon, after having followed the shore of the island for a great distance. They were of the opinion that it required more than a day's journey in a rowboat to circle it. Rowing in one direction for a long time and seeing no curve which would lead them to believe that they were coming around again they had turned their boat back.

Several times they had gone ashore and investigated creeks and inlets, and had gone a little way into the tropical forest. They had very little information to show for their day's work, and Dr. Schlauss Hyman's hands were blistered from using the oars.

Dreen had been very successful in his hunting, and had come back at five o'clock with a brace

of wood pigeons, a paroquet and a young wild pig, the bringing of which over his shoulder had stained his white clothes with blood and ruined them for all time.

"I saw some antelopes, too," he told Dorothy, "but one of them stopped and looked at me—sort of pathetic-like, you know—and, honestly, I didn't have the heart to shoot—I just didn't. Though," he added regretfully, "it looked mighty juicy and tender."

Pursey Ochs proved himself to be the man of the hour by coming to the front and offering to roast the wild pig. He had much experience in that line, he said. He told them some stories of some political barbecues in which he had assisted, and then sent Dreen off to dig for yams ("sweet potatoes," he called them), which he told Dreen were to be found growing under a certain dragon-tree. Dreen returned with the yams and washed them, about the time that Ochs had cleaned the pig and gotten it into condition to roast. The three of them went out beyond the house, and Pursey Ochs directed Dreen to dig a hole, in which the pig, wrapped in green leaves and surrounded by sweet potatoes, was placed. The fire built, Ochs seated himself on a soap-box with a stick in hand, with which he would every now and then test the tenderness of the porker. It was still roasting when the explorers returned from their voyage, and there was much excitement among the other four as

to the pig's condition, Ochs issuing bulletins at intervals of ten minutes. At last the perfect roast was announced, and Brent and Dreen brought out a huge platter, upon which the young pig was placed and triumphantly borne into the house and to the dinner table.

The feast over, they were quite gay over the events of the day, but the conversation soon took a more serious turn and the talk drifted to what they should do when the ship from the north arrived. Before ten o'clock they went to bed.

Thus began their life on the island, and this life was disturbed not at all for a full week, during which time they settled down to a routine that still held in it all the elements of novelty. They gave up the attempt of exploring the island, deciding that it was much larger than they had expected, and Brent spent much of his time teaching Ochs and Hyman to shoot straight. They made a rifle range and erected a huge board with a bull's-eye on one of the little rocks in the cove, and the newspaper editor and surgeon made the most of their opportunities and ammunition. Brent and Dreen evolved a series of physical exercises for their weaker companions, and tried to teach them to wrestle. Ochs and Hyman, shamed at the superiority of even Dorothy to themselves when it came to physical strength, worked like Trojans to overcome their years of sloth, regardless of the resultant aching backs, necks and arms. Brent

cut some branches from a lignum-vitæ tree and trimmed them into tolerable imitations of single-sticks. With these he bouted, for partners having Dreen and Dorothy, until the other two had sufficiently mastered it to take a hand.

They had no trouble in sleeping. When they went to bed each one of them was healthily tired out. Between exercise and cold baths, Pursey Ochs lost flesh rapidly and gained muscle. He felt his arms each day, encouraged by the hardness they were acquiring, although when he looked at the enormous thews and sinews of Dreen and Brent he was inclined to be disheartened.

The housework was equally divided among them, and there was a certain rivalry as to which one could do his share in the neatest manner. After many abortive attempts at cooking, they began to acquire some skill in the culinary art, most particularly Dorothy, who had the instinctive quickness of women in mastering domestic details.

And so a week passed, during which time the inevitable coming of the two ships had become hazy in the minds of all save Brent. Somehow his presence had given them a sense of security; each looked to him as a leader, expecting him to meet the contingency when it should present itself. And many fine lines began to come out between his brows; a haunted look was ever in his eyes when he found himself alone. For he

knew that two ships must come soon, and knew when they came he must be prepared.

He trusted himself no more alone with Dorothy. He did not believe he had the right to assert his claims over the others, nor to create jealousy in the camp by any marked attention. But already mentally he had begun to look upon the girl as his own, to take on certain proprietary airs that evidenced the state of his feelings toward her. And she, knowing, was glad.

For this was to her the ideal man exemplified; even the faults that were his took on the appearance of virtue in her eyes. His domineering ways, his roughness, his egotism, his almost dandified care as to his person, and his physical vanity, all these were to her traits as much to be loved as his more pleasing ones, not because they were in themselves pleasant, but because they were *his*.

She had carried the vision of Bauldwin Brent with her ever since her school days, and while she had been the heroine of a number of romantic affairs with men of her acquaintance, none had ever swept away the thought of the idealized adventurer. Ever since her last year at school it had been Brent—Bauldwin Brent. In her mind stood out clearly the day when her roommate had smuggled in a copy of his first book. She remembered how they had read it, round-eyed with admiration. And the image of their

favorite romantic actor had gone toppling from his shrine, and the candles and the incense burned for Brent, the Adventurer.

And now new candles had been lighted and the blaze was waxing brighter every hour.

CHAPTER X

THE MERCENARIES EMBARK

THE *Valkyrie,* intended for the first vessel of the Republic-to-be of the Philippines, had been one of the Japanese Maru boats of the Nippon-Kaisha line, plying between Seattle and Yokohama. Commandeered by the Government for use as a transport during the Russo-Japanese war, she had carried explosives from Nagasaki to Chemulpo, and later to the blockading fleet outside Port Arthur. Such hazardous work as this had required that she be armored, and from a peaceful passenger liner she had been converted into a cruiser, the armor belt varying in thickness from five to nine inches, extending from amidships a sufficient distance fore and aft to cover her most vital parts and to a certain depth below the water-line. No armor being torpedo-proof, she was not armored along her whole length or either side, nor from the deck to the keel.

She was a 10,200-ton steel vessel, 440 feet in length, depth to main deck 29 feet, beam 53, and

with a tested average speed of eighteen knots an hour. She was driven by a vertical expansion engine with a single screw. Her freight accommodation was four thousand tons, and she had space for six hundred or more passengers. Since the vessel had been purchased for the use of the Republica Filipinas, she had been fitted up with an armament—one 12-pounder and five 6-pounder quick-firing guns.

Painted white, with three green-striped funnels, she was conspicuous for nothing save her general appearance of neatness as she lay in the Nagasaki roads, two weeks after Lanier-Daingerfield had held converse with the Masked One of the Pagoda and had formally declared himself one of the officers of the cruiser. Since that time he had lived with a haunting dread of what he had done. Had he not feared he might have broken his compact and left Japan. He speculated, perspiring coldly, at the outcome should he prove traitorous to his new country, as he had to his old. The Masked Man he had not seen since that night, but his presence was felt the more for that. It was as some one in the darkness, unseen, stepping noiselessly, but always at one's elbow. He had made no threats, extorted no promises, but the sinister eyes seemed to glint through the black mask of all dark spaces. Pure imagination! but Lanier had grown to fear the darkness, to liken it only to that same black domino.

No one watched him, that he knew. He was free to come and go as he listed. Certain work was required of him as executive officer of the *Valkyrie,* but that was too little to take up his time to the extent of forgetting two pairs of eyes—those sinister black ones on one hand, threatening him; Dorothy's great blue ones wide in horror at the thought of a man who stood arrayed against his own country.

He went about his business sullenly, doggedly, wishing for some early untoward happening that would suddenly sweep him out of the way. He had not your scoundrel's lack of conscience, Lanier; he had not been built for a traitor. He was only weak, unable to preserve his own character in a froward environment. Lack of money for the pursuit of his pleasure had brought about the beginning of his end.

He had loved Dorothy Gordon, honestly, sincerely and without self-affection. His desire for her was untinged by any imagining of his own betterment. He wanted her to fondle, to protect, for the telling of love-tales. He would have had her bask in the warmth of his better nature. She called out all the good that was in him. He felt able to do the big things when he was with her.

"Did you ever want a woman's respect?" he asked the Englishman, Phillips, one day. He whom the others called "Prince Bertie" was the one of the lot to whom Lanier had felt

drawn. He fancied him much the same sort as himself, one too weak to withstand self-gratification.

"Lord, no!" "Prince Bertie" had replied, staring at him and slowly smiling, English fashion. "I wanted them to love me as I *was,* y' know. Nothing that I wasn't. Wanted them to love me in spite of the fact they *couldn't* respect me. I know jolly well no one could respect *me.* I'm a bad rotter, old chap; a bad rotter, a wastrel, and all that sort of thing. Ra-ther."

He still smiled slowly, and the expression of his eyes became reflective, even a trifle inclined to pensively, but he looked up, laughing boisterously.

"That's a clinking good one, y' know."

"Yes, I guess it is." Lanier's tone was very weary.

"Why, you confounded ass," blustered Prince Bertie, with assumed jocoseness of manner. "You don't mean to rag me into thinking that you—*do?*"

"Yes—wather," answered Lanier again. It was a pity that his lisp was so pronounced when he wished to be taken most seriously, and the odd babyishness of his speech made one undetermined whether to be sorry for him or to laugh. Phillips did not laugh this time. There was more to Phillips than to the others. Like Lucifer, he had fallen from very high places,

and while, like his prototype, he was perhaps more accomplished in sin than any of his brother officers, he still retained the natural decent impulses of other days.

"You take my word for it, old chap," he said, disguising the tremor in his voice, "she wasn't worth it—none of them are. Yes, I used to want a woman's respect, and—all that sort of poppycock. And it *was* poppycock. I believed in her, by God! I wanted her—wanted her! Dash it all, Lanier, she was my own brother's mistress all the time—all the time, y' understand? Yes, by——"

"This is another kind," grated Lanier. "Shut your head, you! This is another kind. Remember that! Another kind!"

But Phillips had recovered his characteristic phlegm and was staring at Lanier coolly, as a species of a strange animal under emotion. "Right you are, old chap," said he. "Bless you, of course you're right. Every one of them is a different kind. Right you are!"

It was one of "Prince Bertie's" rare moments when he was sober. He made it a rule very seldom to be in this state, and it was remarked that his duties were much better performed when he had, to quote Brian O'Shane, "the matter of a quarth of usquebaugh aboord." The Englishman did not live at the pagoda with the rest of the officers. He was reputed to have an establishment up-hill, which

he shared, more or less legally, with a girl of the tea-houses. Several times he had extended an invitation to Lanier to accompany him on one of his drinking bouts, but Lanier, with the face of Dorothy still before him, had refused. The slant-eyed girls, with their artificial, doll-baby ways, and lack of sex emotion in their yellow hearts, made no particular appeal to him.

The time of waiting for the ship to sail had seemed almost interminable to him—a little century—and at six o'clock on the night of embarkation he sat over his dinner in the Nagasaki Hotel, turning the matter over, looking for a solution. He *could* not go with them. His optimism had extended its hand to him again. Surely Dorothy *must* care for a man who loved her as he loved, who could not live without her. It was impossible that she could marry another man when he needed her so much. He would cut loose from this piratical gang, turn over his information to the United States Consul, place himself under his country's protection and smash the scheme for good and all. The United States would surely reward him; perhaps they would give him back his place in the Navy—who could tell? Then—he could go to Dorothy—then——

But if he went into this raid, there would be no chance, and he knew he deserved none. As Benedict Arnold had, in his school days, been held up to him as a figure of undying shame, so

would Henry Lanier-Daingerfield be presented to the children of another generation. A Judas, a—no, he could *not* do it.

He opened the *Nagasaki Press,* the little four-page daily sheet gotten out by an Englishman named Pardon and provided with the cable dispatches by way of Tokyo. He read idly as he ate his chop, until his eyes fell on a paragraph announcing that, during a typhoon, five passengers of the *Sultana* had been lost at sea. It gave the name of Miss Dorothy Gordon among them, and further stated that they were lost beyond any hope of recovery, as the *Sultana* had spent a day cruising about in the vicinity of their loss, and had found no trace of them.

Lanier sat there a long time in the tiresome cramped position he had assumed when first he had picked up the paper—one arm crooked forward and above the table, the other hanging loose. His face was very white, his eyes blank. His coffee went cold, the hot chop changed to a cold, grease-covered piece of meat. The Japanese "boy" who served him asked several times if he should bring dessert, and got no answer. He shrugged his shoulders. He did not understand the foreign devils.

Presently Lanier took the paper and deliberately tore it into little bits. He beckoned.

"Catch sweeties for master?" inquired the boy.

"Whiskey—Scotch!" said Lanier.

"What fashion catchee?"

"Whiskey, boy!" repeated Lanier, so sternly that the Nipponese hurried away, bringing back a bottle of Black and White and another of Tansan. Lanier did not open the last. He poured out a drink, swallowed it, lit a cigarette, took another drink, another, another, until the whiskey bottle, which had been but half full, was drained.

The boy mentioned the price fearsomely, and handed Lanier the "chit." He signed it and walked unsteadily out of the hotel to the veranda, where he stood watching the winking harbor lights.

"There's a good ship," he told a man totally strange to him, who stood near. "That's my ship. That's the *Valkyrie*. That's a good ship. I'm going to sail south on her to-night. It's a good ship. Don't you think so? That's the one over there—see?"

He pointed vaguely in the direction of the Pacific Mail dock. "See?"

"Sure," soothed the man, proving himself by the single word an American and genial of nature. "Sure—it's the best ship in the harbor."

"You're a good fellow," protested Lanier, charmed by this ready acquiescence. "Have cigarette?"

The stranger declined on the ground that he was smoking a cigar. Lanier, unsatisfied, veered

around him, eyeing him from different positions.

"You're a good fellow," he said again. "Come on, have drink. You're all right. You're good fellow."

To "Prince Bertie" the stranger owed a debt of gratitude for arriving at that moment in company with the white-haired Irishman, Brian O'Shane, and relieving him of the presence of the drunken naval officer. He hurried away, and the two brother-officers took Lanier's arm, hailing him with boisterous terms of affection. Neither had drunk wisely and both were hilarious. For the first time since their acquaintance with him, they found Lanier in a similar mood.

"The old hooker pulls out at ten, y' know," confided Phillips in a hoarse whisper. "Last night ashore, dear chap; last night ashore. Got to be aboard by ten, she weighs at eleven. Pfferkorn's marched his men over from Moji and we take 'em aboard at ten. Two hours, old chap, two hours."

Lanier remembered that they got into rickshaws and were whirled up to the tea-house hills. He recalled that geishas danced for them to an accompaniment provided by tuneless stringed instruments; that he had his arm around girls in kimonos and kissed scarlet lips. Of the three he was the wildest in his dissipation. He compassed no further intoxication,

for the whiskey had made him as drunk as was possible, but he poured *saki* down his throat until it was blistered. He danced, reveled, kissed girls, harshly bruising their lips; squeezed them in bear-hugs, whirled them about in barbaric dances, shouting all the while irrelevant broken phrases. There was a song that he had heard Phillips sing and he broke into snatches of it, wild snatches, lacking harmony and delivered at the full extent of his lung-power:

"Say, boys, do you know San Ohaki?
She's my little Japanese wife.
You'll find her in old Nagasaki
And she's mine—you can bet your sweet life."

And then the queer little painted girls would smile at him artificially, and coo to him in their broken English, telling him they liked "Amerikeenas."

"Like ——! Like our money, that's what!" he would yell violently. And the rest of the song would recur to him:

"I can have her whenever I want her,
Providing I stand for the bill,
And plenty of saki
For me and Ohaki,
My almond-eyed Jap on the hill."

After that he recalled that they swung along in rickshaws again and the harbor lights blinked at him. Somewhere along the Bund they got out, and a rickshaw-man wanted more money. He swung on the coolie, felling him with a blow under the ear; afterwards resenting volubly the violence of Phillips and O'Shane, who hustled him into a *sampan*. The cool air on the water revived him somewhat. He remembered they reached the *Valkyrie* and he went on duty somehow, and presently saw boatload after boatload of tatterdemalions come aboard, their faces grotesque in the flickering torchlights. It seemed that all the foreign riff-raff of Nagasaki were marching up the ladder. One boat discharged its passengers and rowed off, only to make room for another, packed to the gunwales. All sorts of faces there, yet no personal impression remained, only that all of them were evil. And the evil impression was further aided by exteriors, for the recruits were in the ragged clothes in which they had enlisted, no others having yet been furnished them.

They were discharged American and English soldiers in remnants of their uniforms, held together by strings and pins; Americans from the Philippines, from the Peking Legation Guard, from Guam; Englishmen from the Shan-hai-kuan garrison, from Wei-hai-wei, from Chefoo—unshaven and unkempt, the lowest of the Anglo-Saxon types; greasy, treacherous-looking Ital-

ions from the concessions; Greeks of the Temple-Bell janissaries, ear-ringed, white-kilted, with long knives in their red belts. It was one of these who spat out a vile word at an ex-Tommy Atkins in a forage-cap, the aftermath of a shove received as he was about to step from the boat. The Briton, grinning cheerfully, knocked him backward, and he sprawled three feet up the ladder. Lanier saw the yellow teeth of the Greek in a ghastly smile.

"Bad man—*malo hombre,*" he confided to himself, drunkenly. "He'll do for that 'Tommy.' Sure, he'll do for that 'Tommy.' "

There were stolid, beefy-looking Germans, some bewhiskered Russian deserters in soft-leather boots, hailing from Harbin and Moukden; a number of Chinese in the uniform of the Imperial Army, Spaniards, Portuguese, Eurasians of indeterminate ancestry, the scum of all nations; dirty, ill-kept, villainous—some five hundred in all. But there were no Japanese among them.

"Foxy beggars," mused Lanier, some connected threads of reasoning piercing his befuddled brain. "Don't take any ch-chances having 'Merica say they're mixed up in this. No Japs, no Japs!"

General Pfferkorn, riding-crop in hand, superintended the embarkation, not scrupling to use the crop when one of the recruits jostled another or tried to leave the boat before the word was

given. His officers, numbering ten, were as mixed as the soldiers themselves. Two of them wore the uniform of the French Foreign Legion and had evidently belonged to a brigade stationed in Cochin-China. Three had Imperial Chinese Army tunics and looked like Germans; two more were attired as infantry lieutenants of Siberian Cossacks; one had the scarlet jacket of an English corporal; the others were in khaki and pongee, unornamented, and were nondescript. Each was similar in one respect: they had familiarity with the sort of brutes given over to their charge, and distributed kicks, curses and blows among the men with great impartiality.

And after awhile the torches sizzled as they were thrown in the water; there was the whirring of the anchor chain, the shaking of the decks as the screw began to revolve, and out of Nagasaki harbor quite noiselessly the *Valkyrie* glided, its nose turned south toward the island in the South China Sea.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEAD MEN ON THE SANDS

On the night of their seventh day on the island the five Americans had retired earlier than usual, for the heat of the night made it more desirable to get into cool pajamas than to sit about buttoned up to the throat in their uniforms. Besides, the lamps and candles added to the heat, and did no particular service, the night being much too warm for reading to prove a pleasure.

Brent pushed his bed close to the window, adjusting the mosquito-screen that the noxious insects of the night might not disturb him, and after tossing about and throwing the sheets on the floor, fell into a light, uneasy sleep, from which he was awakened several hours before dawn, oppressed by the feeling that he was being frozen. Jumping up, he found that his bed was soaked and that his pajamas ran with water, both the result of the heavy, driving rain that pelted the screen and dashed itself into the room. Shivering, he pushed his bed into the

centre of the room, threw off his night-clothes and rubbed himself with a bath towel, after which he drew around him a heavy kimono and pulled down the window.

The stars had disappeared, the moon was sunk behind the clouds, the skies black. He heard the soughing of the wind and the heavy, sullen roar of the breakers on the shore. The night-birds were shrilling warnings, there were many flutterings of wings, as bats, owls and other creatures of the night flurried to shelter. The wind had changed from a tropical, scent-laden zephyr to a cold, fierce gale, redolent of sea salt. Intermittently the sky was streaked with orange flame, predecessor of the dull boom-boom of the heavy guns of the heavens. So insistently did the rain beat against his windows that it seemed flung in great splotches by a giant hand.

From where he sat he could note the sea illumined by phosphorescent, ghostly balls of light, zigzagging across the water, frosting it palely and with a glare not of the natural things —the St. Elmo flame that sometimes rose on the crest of white breakers, sometimes seemingly extinguished in gulfing voids, hinting of lanterns carried by invisible storm-demons who had shrieked up the tempest and who rode exultingly in the chaos they had created. And their breath, the blow of their mouths, beat upon the shore, causing the palms to shed their fronds

and their fruit, and with the other trees to bend and sway, sending from them the birds on wing to spread the news by their frightened squawks that the powers of evil were loose and that death was abroad.

A spray of golden hibiscus blossoms was dashed against Brent's window. A dragon tree by the house swayed and split thunderously, carrying with it in its course to earth the smaller trees in its path. Brent, brought to his feet by the crash, was alarmed by a scream from Dorothy's room, two doors down the hall. He slid his feet into his slippers and knocked on her door.

"It isn't anything, Miss Dorothy," he called. "Don't be afraid. It's only a tree—that's all."

"No, no," called the girl, and her door was flung open. She was wrapped in a cherry-colored kimono, similar to his own, and her hair hung loose about her face. "No, no! I wasn't afraid of that—not that—it was—it was——"

The yellow glow of lightning lit the room, and showed him her face haggard, her eyes staring. He was moved to a sudden feeling of tenderness of protection.

"Dorothy," he said, softly, and laid his hand on her arm. Her tears fell hot upon it and her body shook convulsively. Almost without knowing he put his arm about her, supporting her.

"There, there, little girl," he said, soothingly. "You've had a bad dream. Go back to bed.

The storm isn't anything. It'll soon blow over. Go back to bed."

But she clung to him, terrified. "I've been watching. Oh, Brent, Brent!—it's the ship. I can see it out there. It's the ship. It's come. I can see its lights. Oh, Brent! what are we to do—it's the ship—don't you understand—*the ship!*"

"No, no, dear," he said, still as one quiets a child who is afraid. "It's the St. Elmo's fire. That's all—that's all. Now——"

"No!" she almost screamed. "It *isn't*—it——" With a strength which she did not know she possessed, she pulled him after her into the room, threw up the window and screen and stood with him there, the rain beating in upon them. Her hand was outstretched.

"There—the ship!"

Looking out through the haze Brent saw only the pale St. Elmo's fire; then another lightning flash tore the black clouds into gleaming particles and revealed, sliding the sheer slope of the green waves, storm-beaten, helpless in the face of the gale, a schooner vainly endeavoring to shape its course along the shore. The sight faded out with the light, and again there was only the ghostly phosphorescence.

"Yes," he said, his lips tense, "it *is* a ship."

He released Dorothy's grasp very gently.

"We must dress," he said, "and that as quickly as possible. These men may be our

enemies, but if we can help them at all in this —well, we ought, and—maybe it isn't the schooner from Hong-Kong. Maybe—but God knows!"

He ran hurriedly into the hall, throwing open Ochs' door. The newspaper-man awakened. Brent pulled Dreen into consciousness. Hyman he found already awake and hurriedly robing himself. Brent himself lost no time in getting into what constituted their scanty attire—shirt, drawers, socks, trousers, hip-boots and tunic. He buckled on his cartridge-belt, to which were attached his black revolvers in holsters; then throwing over all one of the soldier's waterproof cloaks he had found, he pulled a felt hat over his eyes.

"Some one must remain behind with Miss Dorothy," he said, as he stepped into the hall, and saw the others emerging from their various rooms, similarly attired.

"*No one* will remain behind with me," said the girl, as she came out, dragging her cloak after her. "I am going with you. I insist. I must!"

She slipped into her cloak, assisted by Dreen.

"But the storm?" began Brent, doubtfully.

"Don't—don't waste any time!" she pleaded. "I am *going*. You can't force me to remain behind. Hurry, Brent, hurry! Please!"

Brent turned, saying no more, and went down the stairs. He unlocked the front door, allow-

ing the others to pass out, then locked it and put the key in his pocket.

Taking Dorothy between them, Ochs and Dreen stepped forth under the downpour. The cold rain stung their faces, and so great was the first shock of it that they were almost driven back. Brent sallied ahead, carrying in his hand a pocket electric arc that threw a yellow ray a few feet in front of them. They stumbled over fallen limbs, stray cocoanuts, bunches of bananas, all evidences of the storm's wrath, and picked their way down the hillside, their eyes but little assistance, so blinding were the sheets of rain hurled against them. Ochs' hat blew off and in striving to catch it he stumbled headlong over the trunk of a tree, bruising himself and muttering execrations. Brent took Dorothy's arm, which Ochs had released, and the others pulled their hats more securely over their brows, Ochs continuing bareheaded.

When finally they reached the shore they found that the waves were breaking at their feet, and one cold dash catching Hyman unawares, his feet slipped on the sinking sand and he fell headlong. Another wave caught him and swept him out, but Dreen, with a sudden shout, dashed forward, caught the surgeon by the scruff of his neck, and hauled him back to vantage ground. Hyman, dazed, muttered his thanks, and shuddered at his escape.

Shrinking close to the slope, they made their

way along the beach, wary of the breakers, seeking sight of the ship. With the lightning flash showing the sea a boiling spume of green and white, their eyes got their desire, and as they gazed heard a sharp crack, following it the crash of a mass of canvas, spars and broken foremast, crashing to the schooner's deck, heeling it to the larboard. At the same moment the tide caught its nose and veering it around threw the wind from its mainsails; with it the vessel reversed and came flat upon the jagged reef of pink coral with a tearing, splitting noise.

"She's struck!" said Brent, soberly.

"God help 'em, in that sea!" came from Dreen, in awed tones.

But, with the lightning quiescent, they could not be aware of what was transpiring, and they waited, almost breathless, for the next flash. It came and they caught a vision of a ship's boat bottom upward, to which clung ghastly hands, the spray flashing yellow-green aureoles about them in the flame-light. From somewhere came the hoarse yells of terrified men; then the heavens went black again, and they on shore could not see whence came the cries.

They had not long to wait for results. A sudden, startled cry from Ochs as he staggered back to the slope, apprised them of the fact that something heavy had struck against his legs. Brent flashed his pocket-arc upon the drawn, white face of a man in soaked pongee clothes,

and his ready hands dragged him out of the waves' reach. He knelt, then suddenly arose.

"It's Esperaso," he said. "It's Esperaso. And he's dead. His head's cut—he must have struck the reef—but he's dead!"

Dorothy began to cry softly.

Out in the roaring waters the cries of the drowning men became weaker; soon there was silence. Almost imperceptibly the sea began to quiet, the lightning and the thunder ceased to be in evidence. The silence on the shore was broken only by the quiet weeping of the girl, whom Brent held protectingly, and whom he sought to soothe with gentle whisperings.

As the time passed the sea became almost quiet, and out of the east was lifted a red hand above the sky-line, its fingers reaching out, spreading, clutching at the blackness and absorbing it, growing in size until it covered the whole western sky.

"Dawn," someone said.

Following the herald of the crimson hand came the yellow lamp of day, its outer rim projecting amidst the redness. A cool, sweet breeze blew into their nostrils. The adventurers looked to sea.

There arose the coral reef, the pink of its jagged teeth seeming like a grin upon the blue face of the waters, and, at that, the grin of a satiated monster, for resting half upon it, her hull deep in the water, was the wreck of the

schooner, the decks clean-swept, the boats gone, the deck-house smashed, only two broken stumps of masts to testify to its past glory.

"Look there!" said Brent.

They turned their eyes from the black hulk to the shore. Sprawled out in awkward attitudes were the bodies of half a score of men, some half buried in the sand, others with their bodies strangely contorted. One, lifted up and hurled bodily by a wave, had fallen in a sitting position against a camphor tree, his jaws loose, his eyes staring.

"Good God!" said Brent, sickened. Dorothy buried her face in her hands.

Presently they set about examining the bodies. Esperaso they knew. The second man was evidently a Jew. He had a Semitic nose of the more marked of his race, and a number of rings bound the flesh of his fingers, now swollen at the joints. A large diamond horseshoe pin, secured by a catch, fastened his water-soaked red tie. Brent felt in his pockets and drew from them a number of letters that came to pieces as so much pulp as he touched them, but the typewritten address of one had been press-copied and the letters were quite clear:

Mr. Moses Goldenbaum,
72 Desbrosses Road,
Victoria, Hong-Kong,
China.

In putting back the pulp papers Brent felt the man's heart. The Jew was quite dead.

And so they found them all—the long, lean Spanish *mestizo,* Araza y Tagliono; the bulky, yellow-eyed German smuggler, Von Klingen, and near him, elegant even in the face of eternity, effeminate to girlishness, his blue eyes staring stonily at the bluer sky, the renegade Anglo-Saxon, who was known throughout the Orient as "Chirping Charlie," and feared as few men were feared, he whom his parents had given the name of Charles Carr Conkling. It was difficult of belief, with his delicate-featured face before them, that he had been so much the scoundrel.

A little further away, twisted into a strange shape, was the fair-skinned Aorto, whose red-gold hair and perfect teeth had been the visual means of many women's undoing. There was an evil, agonized leer on the face now. He it was who sat against the camphor tree, so seemingly alive, so undoubtedly dead. Near him lay a Lascar sailor, clutching the belt of a Chinese. A man in a torn uniform with faded gold braid had his head buried in the sand at the Lascar's feet.

Brent, with an apology to Dorothy, removed his waterproof and his tunic, loosened his boots and kicked them off.

"I'm going to swim out to the wreck," he replied in answer to their questions. "There may

be some survivors. The rest of you hunt along the shore and——"

He checked himself as the old saying, "Pick up the dead," came into his head, and dropping his boots and tunic on the heap with his waterproof and cartridge-belt, he ran lightly down to the water, and was soon lifting himself, hand over hand, toward the hulk, the sun gleaming on his bare arms. They watched his speedy course in admiration, and saw him reach the wrecked vessel, catch a porthole, and swing himself up. The schooner was tilted on her beam-ends, and when Brent reached the slippery deck he found it no easy task to remain upright. All about him were torn timbers, wrecked apparatus, fragments of sailcloth, rope and iron fittings. He found the wheelhouse smashed, the great mass of wood and iron which formed the steering wheel lying helplessly on the deck. His descent of the companionway was checked by his feet striking against something soft. It was a man's body, his head crushed in by the falling of a heavy timber. The cabin had in it three or four feet of water, on which floated the body of another dead man. There was an acrid, bilgey odor about the place. Brent clutched the rail and ascended to deck again, breathing the sea air with a sigh of relief.

The forecastle was deserted, the cook's galley submerged, and the hold full of the sea water. Save for these two dead men, he found no other

signs of human habitation. The sight of the wreck was depressing, and feeling that all that could be expected had been done he dived from the deck, narrowly missing the reef, and swam ashore.

He found the others waiting with the information that four more bodies, two sailors, Malays, and two Chinese (evidently servants), were in the sand around the bend. Hyman and Dreen returned from the house, whence they had gone a few minutes before, with four spades.

"We're going to bury them," said Dreen.

Brent nodded and took one of the spades. In silence they dug a great trench in the sand above the high-water mark, and into this they cast the bodies of the dead men, shoveling the sand upon them and making the ground hard with blows of the blunt instruments. Their task completed, Brent threw his spade on the new-made grave. He cleared his throat, coughed and cleared his throat again.

"Do you understand?—do you——" The last words were slurred over. He turned away, gazing out to the sea.

"*Do* you understand?" he said again, passionately. "*Do* you?"

"Understand?" echoed Dreen, blankly. Hyman murmured, "*Do* we?" Dorothy watched him. Ochs whistled plaintively Musetta's aria from "La Bohéme." He did not understand what bearing it had on the subject, but uncon-

sciously, almost subconsciously, it seemed the proper accompaniment.

"Don't do that!" The girl tugged his coat sleeve. "Don't do that." Perhaps she read the prophecy of the music, those bars that were to haunt her in the near future.

"Do what?"

"Whistle that thing. Don't whistle it."

"All right."

He dug his hands deep into his pockets. Brent still stared to sea. "Brent!" he called.

"Yes?" As he turned Brent read in the demeanor of Ochs the fact that he alone of all understood what was to be. By a peculiar psychopathic method they seemed to be conversing, although the lips of neither moved.

"Well?" Dorothy's nerves were on edge. Her round blue eyes were big with the understanding that some great thing was presaged and afraid because she did not know that she was to be equal to the emergency.

Brent pointed his finger at her, almost accusingly. "You are Charles Carr Conkling," he said, gravely, as one who stated a fact and is the more sober because it may not be believed. "You are Charles Carr Conkling, Ochs is Herr von Klingen, Dreen is Señor Aorto, Hyman is Moses Goldenbaum, and I—I am Señor Araza. Our ship was wrecked"—he pointed out to sea —"she lies there. Esperaso was drowned; so were all others aboard. But we were saved.

They knew Esperaso aboard, maybe. He was in Japan. Chance may have it that they have never seen the other five. There were two Spanish *mestizos.* I am able to speak Spanish well. So is Dreen. He has ranches in the mesquite country. Hyman is a Jew. So was Goldenbaum. Ochs looks as though he might be a German. His parents were. He speaks German. Charles Carr Conkling was effeminate, girlish. You must cut off that hair of yours." His eyes held only command now as they looked into hers. "We answer the general description. If the men from Japan have never seen the dead men—*we play their parts!*"

Dreen muttered an oath, long drawn out, but in it there was no profanity, only staggering wonderment at the bigness of the thing.

"Fate has played us a funny turn," Brent said again. "A funny turn! a funny turn! The game! *What* a game to play! And she's given us cards—cards—big cards! But have they seen them, they who are to come from Japan? Have they seen them?"

"*Have* they seen them?—us, you mean? Who?" The girl laughed hysterically. "Have they seen us—the others that we are?—oh!" Her laughter was elfish, distressing to those who heard it, distressing as the notes of a singer who has sung beyond her time.

"Dorothy!" said Brent. His voice had the quietness, the heavy quietness that is only when

the natural impulse is to be violent. "You've got a difficult part to play. The man you are to be was—unspeakable. But we're playing a big game—nobody on earth to-day's playing a bigger game than we are. There are thousands of Americans in the Philippines—thousands! If we succeed, then—they'll still be there—unharmed. They are thousands, and we—are only five! Our lives can't matter—only five to save thousands. There isn't any sacrifice too great for an end like that—none!"

She had quieted her eldritch laughter. "I'll —I'll play the game," she said, "and—I'll—I'll remember no sacrifice is too great—and——"

He came forward abruptly, his hands outstretched. She retreated, motioning him back.

"There is no time—for that!" There was a catch, maybe a sob in the words. His eyes followed hers out to sea, to where a thin trail of smoke trickled upward toward the northern skyline. Fascinated, they watched quite silently, no one knew how long, until it was apparent to all that the vessel that gave forth the smoke was headed for the island.

Pursey Ochs whistled again, this time the overture to "William Tell."

"Won't you shut your head?" growled Dreen. "Do you know what that means?" His doubled fist was shaken at the smoke on the horizon.

"Sure I do," replied Pursey Ochs. "Sure I know what it means, you chump! I'm glad it's

coming. Sooner over the better. On with the dance—let joy be unrefined. What the blue blazes do we care, anyhow?''

He had lost his equilibrium, his mental poise. He rubbed his eyes wonderingly, felt his pulse.

''Came sooner than we expected,'' said Hyman, in a still, small voice.

''But *you* play the game?'' demanded Brent, turning fierce eyes upon him. Hyman stood suddenly straight, looking at Brent squarely.

''I apologize, Hyman,'' said Brent. ''Of course we all play the game, all of us.'' He took Hyman's hand.

There was something bigger, stronger about each one of the five. For in their eyes was the look that comes to those who must play great parts in the world's tragedy.

CHAPTER XII

MASQUERADING

It was five days after the *Valkyrie* left Nagasaki that she anchored off the island, a biscuit-toss from where the ill-fated schooner had found its end upon the reef, and it was not five minutes from the latter time that a gleaming white boat put off from her side, and made for the point where Brent was waving his waterproof coat as a signal.

The boat was manned by Chinese seamen in blue pajamas, barefooted and bare-armed, round blue duck wideawakes on their heads, stamped with palm trees and the initials of the republic-to-be. They rested their oars before they came to the sandbar, and a white man standing in the stern hailed the five on shore.

He was in white drill trousers, with a blue naval jacket, the sleeves of which had four gold stripes twisted into a curl above, to represent him as an officer of the navigating staff. He wore a white cap with a blue visor and ornamented with the now familiar palm-tree, and a

beautifully fitting turnover collar, into which was twisted a four-in-hand red scarf, fastened with a long, flat amethyst in a gold pin. The roll of the double-breasted jacket was very long, displaying immaculate linen, and when he lifted his cap it was to show a head of closely cut hair, with a part in the middle so wide as to seem a line of baldness.

"Ahoy there, you ashore!" he called. "I'm the musical-comedy lieutenant, and I've come for a look at your bally old island. Where's Esperaso? He'll do the presenting rot, eh?"

"Esperaso, he is dead," called back Brent, simulating the accent of the Latin races when they speak English. "We had a wreck—you see it there." He pointed to the hulk of the schooner.

"A wreck—well, that's jolly awful," said the man in the boat without the slightest trace of concern. "And so Esperaso's a dead 'un, eh? Well, that's jolly awful, too, ain't it now? My name's Phillips, Jim Phillips, and I come from the *Valkyrie*. 'I come from Table Mountain and my name is Truthful James,' " he quoted with a laugh. "Only I never told the truth in my life. But, I say, you people, ashore, the captain sent me to bring you back to breakfast. Eh? Is it a go?"

"We shall be pleased to accept," replied Brent, with the studied carefulness that he expected Araza y Tagliono might have used.

"Right-o!" said Phillips, cheerfully. He turned and spoke to the Chinese sailors in pidgin-English. "Here you, five-piecee boy, make chop-chop that side, catchee five-piecee men, cally them all-same this side, so no catchee water-pidgin, you savvy?"

It was apparent that they did, for five of the Chinese immediately rolled up their blue pajamas to their thighs, clambered out of the boat and into the water, and waded to shore. Each one of the adventurers was accommodated with a seat on the shoulders of a Chinese, and carried out to the ship's boat. The sailors resumed their work at the oars, brought the boat about, and Phillips steered for the ship.

"Didn't want to beach the boat," he explained. "It's too beastly much bother. You didn't mind the horseless carriage effect, eh? Thanks! that's awfully good of you. By-the-bye, I'm the second officer of the *Valkyrie*. Yes, Phillips is the name. Jim Phillips." He turned to Dorothy, smiling slowly: "I'll wager a thick 'un you're Charlie Conkling. My word; but ain't you the ripping female, though!"

It was some half-hour after they had sighted the ship, and Dorothy now stood denuded of her masses of ripe, wheat-colored hair. They had returned to the house hurriedly, she and Hyman, the surgeon being more proficient in the tonsorial art than the others, as the practice of surgery necessitates a working knowledge of

how to cut away hair. With a pair of shears, sharpened on an emery wheel, he had clipped away the yellow locks, wishing he could shut his eyes and not be aware of the crime he was committing, and Dorothy's little head carried now only the amount of hirsute growth that a young man of Conkling's age might be supposed to fancy.

She had flushed at Phillips' words. She was playing the part of a man, and felt keenly that to look like a girl was distasteful. She also knew something of the reputation of Charles Carr Conkling, and surmised the words he would have been likely to use when his appearance was subjected to such description.

"You let my looks alone, Mr. Phillips," she said, with what she imagined to be a dark scowl. "My appearance is my business and nobody's else. And I'll trouble you to remember that. I might look like a 'ripping female' to you, but I fancy if you ask the rest they'll be likely to tell you I'm a ripping male. And the word 'ripping,' as you use it and as I do, have a totally different meaning. You understand?"

"Rather. I know your sort, Mr. Conkling. It's a knife in the back. Rather. That's *your* stride. It takes all kinds of blackguards to make up a gang. I'm one kind. You're another. But it's not for me to say which is the worse of the two. They told me you looked like a girl in men's clothes, but I wasn't prepared to

see an out-and-out Vesta Tilley. However, that gentleman with the beard, now—he's Goldenbaum, I fancy, eh?"

"I look like a Jew, I suppose!" growled Schlauss Hyman.

"My aunt! but you're a good-natured lot! Yes, Mr. Goldenbaum, if you're collecting information about your personal appearance, I'll be frank with you. You *do* look like a Jew. Rather. And there's no mistaking the gentleman with the red curls—El Colorado Aorto. Clinking name! Sounds rather like a Havana cigar. Am I right?"

"My name is Leon Aorto, *señor,*" confirmed Dreen.

Phillips nodded. "You see we've got your descriptions rather well. Now, I'll venture that you, sir, are Don Ambrosino, etcetera and etcetera. Though you might be an Englishman or an American, or anything. I'd take you for a white man myself, if I hadn't been told——"

"I, Señor Phillips, *am* a white man," was Brent's stiff response. "I am Ambrosino de Araza y Tagliono, and my father was——"

"Oh, blow your father! I forgot the Spanish law. The child takes the race of his father. So, of course, you *are* white, aren't you? And there's the German gentleman, Herr von Klingen. No chance of missing you for a Dutchman, old chap. You've all the earmarks of Hoch der Kaiser about you."

The Englishman spoke frankly, brutally, contemptuously, after the manner of men of the upper class, secure in their personal bearing. He made it a rule to be candid always at the expense of others, and in some miraculous way had escaped scath at the hands of the numerous blackguards with whom he had associated and whose personalities he had treated in a manner similar to that he was now using to the five adventurers. There was an indefinable something about Phillips that enabled him to carry off these frank expressions of opinion without hurt to himself. Perhaps it was the fact that he was so unmistakably an aristocrat in personal appearance, and valued himself so little with it all, for he took no account of the position to which he had been born, consorting freely with riff-raff and deeming himself worse than they, knowing that he had been given a high station and had thrown away his chances.

"We've got a miscellaneous assortment of scum aboard," he continued, in his informative way. "The only decent people on the ship are the Chinese. We've got a Chinese crew, Chinese master-at-arms, boatswain, carpenter—all the petty officers are Chinese, in fact. Then there are the three engineers. Three braw Scots fra' the benks of the Clyde. Hat porritch and scones! They're not bad in our sense. They'd barter their bodies for the siller, but their immortal souls work overtime on shore to make up.

The navigating and gunnery officers are a pack of wastrels like myself—all chucked out of some Navy or the other. I used to wear the Queen's uniform myself. I did, for a fact, until they chucked me out. Rather. But tarry awhile until you've seen our 'army of occupation.' My word! but there'll be sorrow in hell when that crew of bloody bounders fall into the brimstone lake. Bear a hand there, you boy." This to the Chinese sailor on the steps of the accommodation ladder. "Maskee that piecee boat-hook. Qui-qui this," as he threw him the rope.

The boat came up alongside the cruiser and Phillips swung himself off on the lower step of the ladder, aiding the adventurers to do likewise.

"Ladies first," he said, with exaggerated politeness, touching his cap as he helped the assumed Charles Carr Conkling to the step. "And sorry—most awfully. Dashed bad eyes. They *will* see things the way they ought to be; and you look so confoundedly like Vesta Tilley. I sent mash notes to Vesta once—'pon honor, I did."

The ship was beautifully clean, the decks scrubbed white, the brass-work reflecting the sun. Chinese sailors were everywhere about, repairing the ravages of the night's storm. One of the ship's boats had been swept from its davits, and had broken two of the ventilators in its crash to deck. Some of the glass in the

portholes had been smashed, and there were other sailors aloft patching up the rigging.

"Rotten storm last night," Phillips informed them. "Had a most shocking time with those beasts below there." He pointed down 'tween-decks, where the ragged mercenaries were sunning themselves while they ate their breakfast and drank coffee from pans. "One of them so far forgot himself as to come on this deck! I gave the beggar a clout on the temple that he'll remember for a deuce of a time. Aren't they a lovely sight? Oh, my word!"

There was an officer pacing the bridge, who turned for only a second to receive Phillips' salute. The Englishman led them below to the wardroom.

"No, I rather fancy you've never seen any of the ship's officers," he said, answering a question that Brent had put. "At least none of them said anything about it. We knew Esperaso. And so the beggar's dead? Well, we'll all meet in hell some time, that's a consolation." As the Chinese boy held open the door for him, he entered, saluting a yellow-mustached, huge-framed man, who rose.

"I've brought them, sir," he said, and dropped his official manner as abruptly as he had taken it up. "Esperaso isn't here. He's dead, they tell me. Here's the other five we've heard so much about. Gentlemen, Captain Arundsen. 'Walrus,' let me present Don Am-

brosino something or the other, Don Leon the Red-Haired, Miss Charlie Conkling, Herr von Pumpernickel, and Judas the Jew. Gentlemen, your servants."

"I protest," said Schlauss Hyman, violently. "I protest. There is no reason why we should be insulted by this Piccadilly Johnnie here, just because he carries a Lord Archie accent and his clothes don't fit him."

Brent stepped a little nearer to "Prince Bertie" Phillips. His lean, olive-tinted face, set in grim lines, was no particularly pleasant sight to see.

"You seem to forget," he said, his right hand suddenly darting out and his fingers clutching the shoulder of the Englishman's coat. "You seem to forget that you are under our orders." He shook the Englishman, much as a terrier might disturb the inner being of a rat. "And especially under *my* orders." His other hand gripped the other shoulder. "And we do not intend to take insolence from our subordinates. Do me the favor to remember *that!*"

He had been holding Phillips at arm's-length, shaking him intermittently. With the last word he flung him backward and "Prince Bertie" collapsed on the padded leather seat running the side of the cabin. He sat there, staring amazedly, and then slowly smiled, got up and offered his hand to Brent.

"Don Ambrosino," he said, cheerfully, "I fancy you're in the right. Do me the honor."

They shook hands with gravity. The white-haired Irishman, O'Shane, was grinning, his sensual lips parted and showing his mouth like an unkept garden full of weeds, with its teeth, black, yellow and jagged. Hendrik Christian and Sturm Sturmson had their usual stolid, wide-open-eyed Scandinavian stare. General Pfferkorn, the Swiss mercenary, who had once been a colonel of Russian hussars, was dozing over his pipe, a condition in which he was generally to be found when not engaged in active service. They awakened him and Arundsen presented the four of them.

"The executive officer, he is on the bridge. At breakfast I do not think he will be," said the Dane. "The other officers of the troops mess in a deck cabin. Them you will be known to later. The engineers, they mess at another time and also them you will know later. *Chow,* boy."

When they were seated at the long, white-covered table, Arundsen, seemingly just aware of the absence of Esperaso, inquired as to that gentleman's whereabouts.

"You're getting deaf, 'Walrus'," observed Phillips, buttering a muffin. "I told you once he was dead. Horrid shame, ain't it? We shall miss dear little Essie so! Oh, a most particularly horrid shame!"

Both of Arundsen's hands went to his mus-

tache, as he twisted the hard yellow ends that so resembled yellow ivory tusks. The blue eye was mild and uncomplaining as it rested on Phillips, but the brow above it scowled. Arundsen, who was born a plebeian, had never overcome his birthright to the extent of being at ease in the company of the well-bred, and he was somewhat in awe of Phillips' candid tongue, allied to his easy air. Besides, the Englishman was completely subservient to discipline during official periods, and was a smart and capable officer. For these and other reasons Arundsen chose to overlook his freedom of speech.

"Dead!" echoed the Dane. "And how is that? He was to be the President of the new Republic. I do not understand that he is to be dead."

Brent dropped the stilted phrasing of the Latin, retaining only the accent, and explained graphically. He told the story of the wreck and described Esperaso's appearance on the beach with a jagged hole in his forehead. The story was true enough in its theme, but Brent permitted himself the anachronism of setting the wreck at four days back of its real occurrence and made of himself and his companions actors in the drama instead of spectators. His training as an author here stood him well, and his four confrères eyed him in admiration, as he introduced lifelike bits of local color, seemingly so real that they almost gave verisimili-

tude to a story which the four Americans knew was not true.

Arundsen shook his head in a very bad attempt to be sorrowful. "Ah! he was a man—that Esperaso! Such a man he was! He——"

"Oh, chuck it, 'Walrus,'" broke in Phillips, disgustedly. "You know jolly well he was a rotter, and a bad egg, and——"

"Silence, you!" roared the "Walrus." "Was he not a friend of the gentlemen you see?"

"And if ye're judging by th' looks on the fa-aces of thim," was the white-haired Irishman's contribution, "they're not all br-roken up over th' same."

"He is dead," remarked Brent, with an air of finality. "The need for discussing him is not apparent. I succeed him as the President of the Junta. I trust you do not object to being under my orders, gentlemen?"

Phillips laughed. "Not after that shaking you gave me," he said. "Though, 'pon honor, my good chap, if I hadn't been so surprised I might have given you rather a tussle, you know."

Brent nodded with a slow smile, and turned to Pfferkorn. "General," he said—the Swiss saluted—"I think it would be well to land your men as soon as you find it possible. The barracks are ready for occupancy. Distribute no arms or ammunition among them. To-morrow I will furnish them with uniforms and then the

arms. Captain Arundsen, I think it well for you to arrange for disembarkment, and perhaps we would do well to confer together, you, General Pfferkorn, and myself. I, as the President of the Junta, represent my friends."

He swallowed his coffee and arose. "To my cabin," suggested Arundsen. He paused to order Christian to the bridge as relief, Phillips to get the ship's boats in readiness, and Sturmson as inspection officer to see that none of the ship's gear was stolen by the ragamuffins; then left the wardroom, followed by Brent and Pfferkorn. Phillips was off to his duty immediately, Ochs, who had taken a fancy to him, in his trail; Dreen was smoking a cigarette and staring out of the porthole, while Hyman listened, with ill-concealed impatience, to a story which O'Shane imagined humorous. With the going-off of Christian, who had been explaining laboriously to the supposed Charles Carr Conkling that he had a wife and six children in Stockholm and that he had once shaken hands with Bjorn Bjornson, Dorothy was left to her own thoughts. She fingered the cigarette which she had lit, not fancying it, occasionally puffing at it with vigor. Noting O'Shane's eyes upon her, she stuck it in her mouth, endeavoring to imitate Ochs' feat of keeping it in one corner, rakishly. As she closed her eyes, which watered painfully, the door opened.

"Arrah! here's another foine gintlemin ye

haven't met," said O'Shane, breaking off in his story and waving his hand to the newcomer. "'Tis 'Lisping Harry,' gintlemin, and to match him ye have 'Chirping Charlie,' if I'm not wrong. 'Lisp,' shake hands with 'Chirp.' A foine pair of bur-rds, ye are."

Dorothy was on her feet, and taking the cigarette from her mouth she looked straight into the eyes of Henry Lanier-Daingerfield. The cigarette dropped from her fingers. She felt a sudden sickness; it seemed as though the walls of the cabin were coming together and smothering her. She opened her eyes and looked again, as her hand rested in Lanier's, and she saw in his eyes incredulous surprise. She waited, prepared to be denounced.

"Sit down and have yer breakfast, Harry," called O'Shane, and introduced to him Dreen and Hyman. Lanier bowed to them slightly and his eyes returned to Dorothy's face.

"I want a word with you," he said. "Come to my cabin, Mr. Conkling."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SACRIFICE

The girl had followed Lanier-Daingerfield dazedly from the wardroom to his cabin, but here she hesitated, as he flung open the door, and stood, his hand twisting the knob.

"Well?" she asked, unsteadily.

"Go in."

She looked away from him.

"Afraid?" he sneered.

This time she met his gaze, as answer placed her hand on the black butt of the revolver protruding from the holster which was strapped to her waist, and stepped over the threshold backwards and into the narrow room. He laughed harshly and bolted the door. With an air of assumed indifference she watched him. He swept from a chair his pajamas, a shoe-horn and other articles, and indicated it.

"Sit down!" he commanded.

She eyed him, defiance in her demeanor.

"Sit down!" he said again.

"I'll do as I please," she asserted, angrily.

"What the——" But even in her time of need she could not voice the oath that she knew Conkling would have used. "What do you want of me?" she finished, weakly.

"I want to look at you," he answered, easily insulting. "You remind me of a girl I know. A girl I love." The insult was out of his voice now. His tones were very gentle. "A girl I love better than myself. A girl I love so much that I know her every action, know every single glint of gold in her hair, every individual caress in her voice. If I should meet her under *any* circumstances I should know her. You understand?"

He offered her his silver cigarette case. She brushed it away with a shaking hand, and it fell to the floor, scattering the little paper tubes. He picked them up and replaced them under the rubbers, lighting one and watching her intently.

Again she could not meet his gaze. Her brain seemed afire, her body throbbed, an ache in every throb. She tried to speak, but her mouth was dry and her lips seemed no longer under her control.

"Dorothy!" he said, tenderly, and caught the white fingers of her little shaking hand. She wrenched it away, and got to her feet, her eyes blazing at him.

"You—" she gasped, "you—you shameful traitor! Traitor, traitor! You shameful traitor, you—you—— Oh, Mother of God, advise me—

counsel me! Oh!" She fell, clutching the chair, but as he bent toward her, she struck him with all her strength squarely between the eyes. Staggering up, she watched him. He sat quite still.

"A traitor, eh?" he said. "A traitor? Yes, maybe I am. But I've kept pretty good faith with you. When I recognized you I said nothing; when I recognized the man passing himself off as Araza, I said nothing. I knew he was Brent. I knew when I saw him that I should see you. I understand the whole game now. I thought you and your four companions were dead—lost at sea. You drifted here. Somehow, you've made away with the real Junta. But did I betray you? Was I a traitor then? No! I've kept pretty good faith with you!"

Although her body was shaken with convulsive sobs, she heard all that he said. She realized that he knew all there was to know; had them entirely to do with as he would. A man who would league himself with the enemies of his country would not hesitate to reveal this masquerading to his companions. Was that to be the finish of all their hopes and plans? They would probably be shot, the five of them, and that would be an end. The men would be landed, trained, sent to the Philippines. The Americans there—what of them!

She sat up, gripping herself into composure. This man alone knew; the others knew nothing.

He had, as yet, told them nothing. He *alone* stood in the way. He was a traitor and deserved death. Charles Carr Conkling had the reputation of a murderer. She had a revolver at her belt. She could shoot. Only a few feet separated her from Lanier-Daingerfield. She could kill him and explain the circumstance as the result of an old feud.

Her hand darted to her holster, tore it open and grasped the black revolver. But in that same second strong fingers closed over her wrist, while others plucked the weapon from her. Lanier put it in his pocket, leaned back and regarded her.

"Dolly," he said, "damn me, if I don't love you all the more for that! Damn me, if I don't. You've got nerve. You're a brave, plucky kid. And so you'd kill me, would you, you gritty little devil? Well, you're all right, and I'm here to fight any man who says you're not. See here! Let me in on this. I'm not so awfully keen on this stunt anyhow. I wouldn't have gone into it if I hadn't thought you were dead. And then I got drunk—and went! And I was broke, too, Dolly! See here, tell me the game!"—

"Tell *you,* you traitor!"

His face darkened. "Look here, by thunder, I'm not so bad as you try to make out. I can't see the traitor part of it so much. Didn't the United States kick me out of the navy? I'm practically deprived of my citizenship. Didn't

the United States renounce me? Well, what do I owe the United States? I was broke, dead, flat broke. You—well, I thought you were dead, and what is the United States to *me,* anyhow?"

"Your country—first, last and all the time. Your country!"

"Dowothy!" Again that pathetic lisp. "I'd do anything for you. I love you——"

"Don't!" She held up her hand.

"Just the same, I *do* love you!" he pursued doggedly. "You know I do, Dolly. Look here—look what I've carried all these years." He unfastened his waistcoat and felt within his shirt, from which he presently dragged out an oval case held by a thin silver chain and encased in chamois. "Stole that from your cousin, Jim Carter. Look here!" He snapped open the case, revealing the picture of a very young girl in a white dress, her yellow hair braided down her back.

"You remember that, Dowothy, don't you?"

She reached for it, but not as quickly as he withdrew it. "You've no right!" she blazed. "You've no right. To think *you* should have my picture! Give it to me!"

He drew his brows together. "Hold hard, there, Dorothy!" he said. "I've kept this picture sacred. You've no call to talk that way. As for giving it to you—a swell chance you've got!" He put it back and buttoned his waistcoat.

"Look here," he said, abruptly, "suppose I promise you, swear to you on my love for you—I'd swear on my honor, but I guess I haven't any—suppose I'd promise that way, would you—would you tell me what you're going to try to do and——"

"No—I don't want anything, anything to do with you, Harry Daingerfield. I——"

"Well, you've got to have something to do with me, whether you want it or not." He took both her wrists and held her so that she was forced to look into his dark eyes. "Remember, I haven't done anything against my country yet. Remember that I love you—that I'll do anything for you. Tell me what you're trying to do. I'll promise to keep mum, to be neutral at all events. Maybe—maybe, I'll throw in my lot with you—because, well, because I love you. Now, will you tell me!"

"Harry!" she breathed. Her eyelashes swept her cheek; she looked shyly at him. She knew her power over men, and the proper poses to assume for an end. There was a sweetness in her tone. "Harry, if you only *would* help!"

Lanier's cheek flushed, his nerves tingled. "I will help you!" he cried, hotly. "The Junta can go to the devil. Tell me."

And she did tell him, with many sidelong glances and pathetic twists in her voice, a break here and there, a sob, a motion of the hand, a movement forward toward him, until the man

was half-mad with desire for her. He did not know of the passages between the girl and Brent. Those she omitted, knowing that her end was to work on the love this man had for her, and realizing the alien note which a reference to her regard for Brent might betray.

"And now," she finished, her eyes regarding him mournfully, "you can betray us if you like."

"Betray you!" whispered Lanier, hoarsely. "Why—why, I'm in with you, in with you heart and soul. For you, for you—why——" He checked himself, remembering there were many things yet to be discussed. "Tell me what you've planned to do."

She was sure of her man now; she knew that she possessed him; was no longer afraid of him. She explained all that the adventurers had discussed between the time they had sighted the *Valkyrie* and the coming of Phillips. How they intended to blow up the arsenal and disable the ship. After that, if possible, to put to sea in an open boat, and hope that they might make the Philippines and warn the government of the plot. He concentrated himself on the problem, hardly hearing her, and when she finished she found him in a brown study, his hands clasping his knees, rocking to and fro abstractedly on the side of the bunk. Presently he looked up at her; his heart was beating wildly, his face scarlet.

"Dowothy," he said, "I've a better scheme than that. Get the crowd to dine ashore tonight. Pfferkorn's officers will have all they can do to look after their unwuly mob, and they will be hard and fast at the barracks. The crew is Chinese and is absolutely devoted to me. I'm the only one who's treated them decently. There'll be only one officer aboard and we can settle his hash. The engineers are neutral and we can fix them. One of your companions will have to stay behind at the bungalow and keep the crowd occupied. They'll all be drunk—first night ashore—and that's easy. Then you and I and the others of your companions can seize the ship, up anchor, and head for Manila. The man who remains behind can blow up the arsenal. He'll have to take his chances and roam around in the woods until we show up from the Philippines with help. We can reach Manila and have the battleships here before the second ship shows up. How's that?"

The girl was gasping. "Harry! Harry!" she cried, her eyes bright as twin stars. "Harry, do you mean it? Do you mean it, Harry? Will you do it?"

"I mean it. I can do it. I *will* do it. But —you've got to promise to marry me if I do, Dolly. If we're successful—as we will be—you've got to give me your word, your oath, you'll marry me. Will you, Dolly?"

He bent closer to her; his voice had been very

tender; his eyes were soft. He took her hands again. She wanted to cry out, to protest, but her lips seemed frozen. Her slender body trembled. She made him no answer, and as she sat there the trembling departed and only the numbness remained. She saw there was but little risk of failure in the scheme which Lanier propounded; saw that through him the insurrection would be crushed before it was commenced, the United States be saved the loss of thousands of its citizens and soldiers. If she refused? Lanier had promised that he would keep their secret, and maybe he would, but he would be cognizant of their every attempt and would thwart them in every possible way. They would be like people in manacles, fettered to his purpose.

What other chance of saving her countrymen had she? Their own schemes were flimsy, impractical. They might blow up the arsenal; they might disable the ship; but another ship was coming from Japan. Their chances of reaching Manila in an open boat were very much without hope of success. And if they did not? The ships at Hong-Kong would be mere hulks; those at Manila likewise. The vultures would descend upon the Philippines, the flag be a thing of the past there, while the United States, six thousand miles away, would read helplessly of the massacre of its sons.

And she, one poor, frail piece of womanhood,

was debating as to whether she should sacrifice her own little life and love to accomplish such an end. Thus her thoughts. She flushed at her love of self. What had Brent said?—"No sacrifice was too great—none." Brent! She knew now how much she loved Brent. For the past week he had been her life, the thought of him had been her soul. She had feasted on the sight of him, thrilled at his words. She remembered the night before, when he had held her in his arms. She had known then how much he loved her, appreciated his reasons for not telling her.

She loved Brent—loved him, loved him! She had thought sometimes that she would have been willing, aye eager, to have him set her some great task for his sake. And now——. He had said, "No sacrifice was too great." And so she would make her little sacrifice—though the dear God knew that it was the greatest one that she, poor yellow-haired child, could make.

"I pr-promise, Harry," she faltered.

His eyes searched hers. "I must have more than that. You understand? I must have your oath. Your oath that you will marry me. I've got you now and I'm not going to lose you. I want your oath, your oath. Swear you'll marry me."

"I sw-swear it, Harry," she said, weakly. She groped in front of her. "I swear it—swear

it, Harry, before the—before God, Harry! I swear—I——"

He caught her in his arms, else she would have fallen an inert mass at his feet. Her face was waxen white, her eyes closed. Her mind, for the time, was mercifully sleeping. She had fainted.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LIGHT THAT WENT OUT

So it was that Lanier did not get any breakfast that morning, for by the time that Dorothy had recovered from her swoon, it was imperative that he should resume his place on the bridge, Christian having only relieved him for his meal. He left Dorothy with the injunction that she see to it that the officers were invited ashore for the night, for, as he explained, it would be easier to carry out his scheme on the first night than on the succeeding ones, as the recruits would be busy getting themselves settled in their new habitations, and would not be likely to wander about.

The girl went on deck, her attitude an attempt to disguise real conditions, a hectic gayety. She was feverish, flushed, broken so far as her own life was concerned, yet eager and anxious that the thing for which she had sacrificed herself should not miscarry. During the day she attempted numerous times to explain the matter to Brent, but he was almost continually in

the company of either Arundsen or Pfferkorn, and she did not dare trust what she had to say to her voice when there was any other within earshot. The affair for the night, however, she managed early.

"Brent," she said, when she caught him for a moment unoccupied, Arundsen having stepped into the compass-room to light his pipe. "You must invite all the officers to dinner at the bungalow to-night. You *must*. I haven't time to explain now; but you *must*. I will explain when I can get you alone, Brent."

Arundsen rejoined them at that moment, and Dorothy slurred the recruits much in the manner she imagined Conkling would have done. "You'll have to shoot a few of the dogs before you get them in hand," she said, with a carelessness for human life that astounded Brent. "That's the only way you can do anything with them!"

"Yah!" affirmed Arundsen, spitting over the side. "Yah! Pfferkorn he shoot straight as it is to kill. And the little bald man who was with Gordon in the time when he train Chinese, he shoot, I think, better. Two men they go crazy—amuck, you say. Opium it is they want, and the bald man—Jenssen, you know, of my country—he says opium is no good. Take away pipe—no black smoke, says Jenssen. They go crazy, fight him. Officer he is, Jenssen. They—they die. Yah, they are all pigs them."

He waved his hand to the boatload just pushed away from the ship. Between the shore and the *Valkyrie* were two more boats, returning, and the white sands were dotted with the mercenaries just landed, part of a long string that pushed its way from the beach up the path to the barracks, where Dreen was acting as guide for the man Arundsen had mentioned, Jenssen, who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel and ranked next to Pfferkorn.

Brent, mindful of what Dorothy had said, invited the ship's officers to dinner by mentioning the subject to the "Walrus," who took kindly to the idea, and said that after tiffin he would send the ship's cook and some servants ashore to make the dinner ready. He called his own Chinese steward and bade him pack his clothes and send them to the bungalow on one of the boats, and to arrange to have the other officers' traps go also.

"It will be as though we go ashore to a hotel," he said, twisting his tusks. "We will have plenty of wine. But women—that is a mistake, there are none." He looked at Dorothy with an inconceivably vicious grin. "It would be well if we had women's clothes for the Mr. Conkling here to in them put himself. He would have lovers—ach!" He kissed his pudgy fingers and his face had a loathsome leer. But Dorothy was too weak and tired in the spirit to resent his words. Brent did it for her.

"None of that, you!" he said, and stuck his face close to Arundsen's, his eyes evil, too, but evil with anger. Into his words he managed to breathe a sinister design. The Dane, brave enough physically, did not understand the mental workings of the supposed Araza, and he feared him for it. He changed the subject to something connected with armament.

Brent had not seen Lanier, and knew nothing of what had passed between him and Dorothy until it was very much later in the day. There was much to do—the disembarking of the men, their installation in their new quarters, the landing of their food supply and such luggage as they happened to possess. The officers were hard put to control the recruits and preserve any discipline once the mercenaries were ashore, and all through the day the beach and the woods echoed shrill songs, lewd curses and the reminders of many personal affairs being waged man to man. A number of barrels of rum were landed. It was promised that these should be broached that night, and temporary quiet came again during the time that the evening meal was being prepared.

Christian had been left behind as officer of the deck, but Arundsen, O'Shane, Phillips, Sturmson and Lanier had all gone ashore, and were met at the bungalow by General Pfferkorn, who was to share the dinner. Brent was still at the barracks with Jenssen, who was not com-

ing, and Pursey Ochs escorted the visitors to the bedrooms they were to use, mentioning the bathhouse by the stream.

"That's a swift lot of gentlemen," was his remark when he came into the reception room, to find Dreen, Dorothy and Hyman there. "What I call very lecherous in their ideas—lechers in fact. Not that I'm a prude or take to myself any great purity of mind. Your silence is flattering, my friends. But at all events, I don't rake out the Augean stables for the purpose of passing a quiet, intellectual afternoon."

"We've got a tough job on our hands, there's no blinking that," said Dreen, gloomily. "The Lord only knows what we're going to do. Say! did you ever see such a lot of low-browed ruffians as that crowd in the barracks? Why, they'd stick you for the price of a drink—stick you in the back. I thought I had seen some bad ones when I used to go down to New York with the college crowd, and we'd hit the Cherry Hill joints. 'Mag's Roost,' 'The Old Hen,' 'The Dirty Rag'—sweet names, weren't they? But, Lord! those cutthroats out there have got 'em skinned a mile. Don't you say so, Brent?"

He turned to see Brent standing at the window, watching them. At his salutation the supposed Don Ambrosino came in and joined the party. His eyes seemed very tired, and there were many fine lines between his brows. He looked older somehow.

He had come in almost at the moment that Lanier-Daingerfield descended the stairs. The ex-naval officer had deemed this the best time for a consultation, knowing as he did that his brother-officers were engaged at the task of getting themselves clean and into boiled shirts. He came forward, and his eyes met those of Brent, who, at the sight of him, stiffened into stoniness.

"Hello, Mr. Brent," said Lanier, easily, and held out his hand.

"I—don't—know—you!" said Brent. Lanier looked about him, and saw that Dreen, Hyman and Ochs had all moved closer to him and that, imitating Brent's example, their hands had closed on the butts of their revolvers. He was taken aback to see in the eyes of each one of these once law-abiding men the ill glint that means swift death to the one for whom the glint is intended. He threw up his hands.

"Tell 'em, Dolly," he said. "They think I'm trying to throw the game. I thought they understood—understood I was in with them. Put them on, or somebody will get careless with his gun and it might go off in my direction and hurt me." He spoke easily, frankly careless and with an ingenuous smile that showed his white teeth.

Dorothy explained rapidly. Her four companions looked almost incredulous at first, then stupefied by the luck that had come their way.

They had been puzzling their brains since the arrival of the *Valkyrie* as to what they could compass to bring about their end. Now the way lay clear for them. But could they trust Lanier? Brent voiced the sentiment.

"Well, old man," replied Lanier, with his same smile, "I could have blown the gaff this morning when I recognized you and Miss Gordon. I didn't do it, and so"— he shrugged his shoulders—"I can't see what you'd have me do to prove I'm in earnest except to tell you what I've planned."

He gave it to them briefly, much as he had outlined it to Dorothy, adding other details toward the end.

"The thing to do is to get the crowd drunk, if you can; so drunk they won't want to go back to the ship. They don't dare sleep ashore, you know. It's too much risk with those scalawags loose in the barracks. Well, dinner begins at about seven. By nine they'll be drunk. We'll have to be sober. At nine-thirty I'll get up to get a breath of fresh air; all of you will follow —except one. You'll have to settle who that one 'll be among you. The others will join me outside. The man who stays behind will have to keep the officers in the house until he hears three hoots of the *Valkyrie's* siren. Remember, three hoots of the siren. That'll mean we've weighed anchor. They mustn't get out before then. They might alarm the soldiers and then

there'd be hell to pay. We'll make straight for Manila and hustle back a couple of warships. The man who stays behind will take a lot of chances. He'll be hunted like a fox by all this refuse. And, of course, after we've gone, he'll have to blow the barracks sky-high if he doesn't want these men to be armed and put up a fight when the warships show up. I don't mind telling that the man who stays behind won't have a ghost of a show. You'll have to draw lots for that."

He surveyed them, still smiling.

"You can see, there isn't much chance of our losing out, can't you? Well, I must be off now and dress. Old Arundsen's got an idea of all of us coming to dinner in our dress uniforms. Crazy ideas the old fool has, ostentation and all that sort of business. If somebody would mistake him for an aristocrat he'd be tickled to death. Well, the thing's settled, anyhow. Let's all shake hands on it."

Which they did, very solemnly, and Lanier left them and went upstairs again. When he had gone the four men looked at Dorothy in silent wonderment.

"Can we trust him?" asked Brent, dazed that their dreams should be so easily made realities.

"Yes?" echoed the others. "Can we?"

"Yes," said Dorothy, her tone very weary. "We can trust him, my friends; we can trust him."

"But—but——" They did not understand how the apparent miracle had been compassed. "But how did you do it—how——"

The girl looked away from Brent, and she tried bravely to smile, but the smile did not come, only the corners of her mouth were twisted pathetically.

"He is in love with me," she said, simply. "I promised to marry him if we succeeded." And here she broke down. "Oh, go away, go away, all of you, go away, go away!"

Dreen, Ochs and Hyman, sobered, moved off, their feet leaden, their hearts going out to her. Although they did not quite understand why, they knew she was in trouble and needed comfort, help, support. But they had not the right words. They could only be sorry. Very slowly they went upstairs. Only Brent remained behind, staring fixedly at the pitiful little figure huddled up in the armchair.

It was near to nightfall. The sun had sunk, staining the western horizon crimson with splotches of gold. Above were the many pinks and mauves, whites and blues, that come with the afterglow. The soft breeze of tropical eventide came out of the ylang-ylang trees, bringing their scent upon it along with that of vanilla and citron, and swayed the fronds of the palms. The chatter of the monkeys and paroquets was subdued and solemn, as they blinked sleepy eyes and prepared to rest until

the dawn. A bird-of-paradise spread its gorgeous plumes, squawked out its unlovely note and flew lazily to rest. Among the wild limes a nightingale sang.

Presently Brent came over and took her hands gently in his. "Dorothy," he said, and he was as near to weeping as a strong man can be, "Dorothy, you've—you've—*what* you've done! What your country owes you, you poor little girl—and so little, too, and so brave and true and sweet, and, oh, my God! I've lost you, lost you!"

She trembled at his intensity.

"No, no!" he breathed. "No, I haven't lost you! Promise him anything, swear anything to him—but you can't marry anyone but me—not anyone but me. No! You're mine, you're mine—all mine!"

"Yes, yes! dear, dear!" she whispered. "Yes, yes, all yours, dear, dearest one. All yours! But—I—I——dear, I've sworn to him—sworn before God—and I—I—— It was the only way, Brent, you must know, dearest; it was the only way. And so——"

But he had caught her to him and held her so tightly that she had no breath to say more. He kissed her repeatedly, fierce kisses they were, the kisses of a man hungry for love of one woman.

And then, after awhile, he let her go, and

stood with bowed head. She looked at him, her eyes pitiful.

"Dear, you must believe it was the only way!" Her voice was full of sobs and tears; it quavered and broke in spite of her brave attempt to make it easier for him. "It was the only way out. If I hadn't sworn he wouldn't have helped me. He would have done all he could to hurt us. You know he would, dear. Oh, don't frown at me; don't look away from me! I love you, Brent dear, only you!—only you, and very dearly, Brent. But you said no sacrifice was too great. *You* told me that. And I remembered. First I was selfish and thought how much I loved you—weighed myself against all those lives over there in the islands. I was selfish then, thinking of how much I loved you. But you said—no sacrifice—and I remembered, dear, dear! No sacrifice was too great to make —and so I am making it, dear, making it, though it's breaking my heart, for I love you so dearly, sweetheart, so very dearly! So dearly I don't see how I can live knowing I've lost you!" She ended in an outburst of sobbing again, gasping for air, her little body shaken, her hands clasping her heart that beat so wildly that she was afraid.

The man turned, knelt at her feet, and took her face between his palms very gently. Convulsive shudders were running through him. In spite of his will, his voice was not steady.

"My dearest!" he said, and his voice had in it a rare, sweet, sad quality that she had never known it possessed, one that shook her innermost being, "I'm honored, dear, made better, purer, by loving a girl like you—the bravest, truest little woman that ever lived. No matter what happens, I'll go on loving you just the same. He may own you; you may be his wife; but he can't keep me from loving you, can't give you such love as I'm giving you. There'll never be any other woman in my heart—only you. I've given you a love I didn't know I had. It's just love that makes me better, dear; such love that if I can't have you, I don't want anyone in the whole world. Do you know, this isn't like what I thought. I dreamed, you see; yes, even I dreamed. Just as a boy dreams of his sweetheart. Always together, and the sun always shining, and birds singing, and flowers that grew just for us—all that. For it *is* all that when one loves as I love you. Happy plans—but they're all done for now. I've been dreaming a beautiful dream, and now—well, now I'm awake again, and I know that what must be must be—but God knows, dear, I'm—well, I've been starving, dear, and wounded so badly I've screamed in my pain, but this—this is worse than all I've gone through before. I thought I'd had the worst, but then I didn't—believe—a heart—could—break—I didn't believe——" His laugh

was harsh, grating. "But I didn't know, I didn't know, I didn't know!"

She could stand no more. She staggered up, her face agonized. "Brent, you're—Brent, *don't!* I can't stand it—Brent——"

She broke away and ran, her tears, hot and scalding, burning her cheek. The man fell heavily into the chair she had left, and lay there, his feet protruding starkly, his hands hanging to his side. And there he sat until darkness had overspread the land, and as the light went out of the day so it went out of his life.

And when Ochs, Dreen and Hyman came down, brave in their dinner array, he was still sitting there. They lighted the candles and they approached him with sober faces.

"We've come to draw lots to see who remains on the island!" said Ochs, holding out a handful of paper slips. Brent tock them from him, all of them, and very deliberately tore them into little bits and threw them on the floor.

"There'll be no drawing of lots," he said, harshly. "*I* remain on the island!"

CHAPTER XV

THE TRAP AND THE BAIT

To their protests he was as one dumb, standing there stonily, reiterating his intention. "I'm the one; I'm the one," he said, many times. "I was elected leader. I delegate the place to myself. Maybe you'll understand better when I tell you that Miss Gordon is to marry this man Lanier. And I love Miss Gordon. Maybe you understand?"

Pursey Ochs caught his hand. "Somebody's dealing us a royal flush," he said. "But you —you've got a trey hand, Brent."

Brent put one hand over the other. "Ochs," he said, "look after her, will you? See that she doesn't come back to the island. See that she stays in Manila. Will you?"

There came a strain of anxiety into the newspaper editor's voice. "Do you think you'll peter out here? Say, Brent, we can't stand for——"

Brent shrugged his shoulders. "I want you to promise, Ochs, and you, too, Hyman and

Dreen. I want you all to know there's nothing matters to me except Miss Gordon. It's like traveling on a road, this going through life—some of the places are mighty rough. But a man doesn't whine, not if he *is* a man. You see, I don't trust this Lanier overmuch. He's bought —with a price—herself!"

Pursey Ochs wrung his hand silently. "I—well, she doesn't care for me. Still that doesn't keep me from—but, anyhow, I'll keep my eyes peeled—and, well, if anything happens to you, and I don't get a chance to speak to you again, I just want you to know I used to think damn little of you—but now there's only one person I like better—and that's the little girl. See?"

He released Brent's hand, and walked out on the porch. Hyman and Dreen shook hands with Brent silently, but there was much in what their faces told him. They followed Ochs, and Brent went upstairs.

He gripped himself into composure. He must think about his plans for the night. He must carry provisions and arms in his flight. First to get the provisions. Under the very eyes of the captain's steward and Chinese boys who were preparing the meal in the kitchen he procured several tins of meat and biscuits and some limes. He took these to his room and put them in a shooting-bag which he had made out of a sail-cloth for carrying game. He filled up the rest of the space in it with cartridges. From

the wall he took down his rifle, examined the breech, loaded it. The bag and the rifle he left on the bed, then stripping off his tunic, he washed his face and scrubbed his hands, and before putting on a clean tunic strapped about his waist his cartridge belt and his two black 45 revolvers. He pulled up his hip-boots and buckled them above the knee. Then he blew out the candles and went below.

Stepping out on the porch, he closed the lower shutters of the dining-room windows, and, with a hammer and nails which he had picked up in the arsenal the day they mined it, he fastened them securely, so that they could not be pushed out from the inside, leaving the upper ones open for air. As the lower ones were some feet higher than the tallest man among them, he knew it would be no easy task for escape that way, figuring it concisely that should those within desire to open them they would doubtless waste much time in endeavoring to batter them down before they considered the possibility of climbing over them.

He left the porch for the kitchen, where he instructed the Chinese boys to bring up the magnums of champagne from the cellar and to cool them in the well. In addition to these he had them find Scotch and rye whiskey, Three Star brandy and Japanese *saki,* also a number of the indispensable seltzer siphons.

He himself placed the four silver-plated can-

delabra on the table and lighted the candles, and while he was thus engaged Dreen came hurriedly into the room.

"They're all ready," he said. "What about the dinner?"

"Bring 'em in," said Brent, grimly. The trap was laid, the bait the dinner. He—the trapper—that was soon to be hunted. He was to trap them in this little room; they were to have him trapped on the island.

They came in, brave in the dress uniforms which Arundsen had insisted that they wear, Phillips and Lanier conspicuously elegant figures by contrast with the others. The blue mess-jackets, with their gold ornamentation, sat well upon the American and the Englishman; illy upon the others. Arundsen had the appearance of a uniformed porter of a Continental hotel; O'Shane that of a low comedian; Sturmson, a footman; Pfferkorn, an over-dressed pedagogue. But it took such clothes as these to bring out Phillips' courtliness of bearing, attitude of easy command. The Englishman wore flat amethyst studs in his white shirt-bosom, gold links begemmed in the same way, two rows of monogramed gold buttons across his white silk waistcoat. Lanier's appearance of breeding and fitness in the attire was also signally stamped, and his very paleness went well with the expanse of white, contrasting sharply with his short, crisp black hair. Dorothy came in

last of all, and found herself seated next to O'Shane, on the other side Dreen. Ochs was between Phillips and Hyman, and next the doctor sat Pfferkorn. Brent sat at the head of the table, Arundsen at the foot.

The dinner consisted of many courses, skillfully prepared by the Chinese steward, who had once served in a similar capacity aboard an American man-of-war. He had produced soup, fish, several entrées, a roast, a salad and dessert, and as these courses held long intermissions between them—due to Brent's orders—there was time to imbibe frequently and deeply, of which all seemed to take earnest advantage, real on the part of the *Valkyrie's* officers, save Lanier, who, with his fellow-conspirators, was pouring most of his supposed potations on the floor. Such men do not drink to excess and remain the sort of gathering where etiquette or propriety of any sort is observed. The unsuspecting *Valkyries* became a roaring company, and risqué stories and lewd jests circulated with frequency, each one greeted with hoarse applause, stamping of feet, great guffaws and beating on the table with knives. To such indecent lengths did the conversation go that Brent flushed red that Dorothy should see how vile it was possible for men to be.

He tried to create a diversion, a diversion of interest, by telling some stories that had nothing save slight suggestion in them, but they were

not the sort that the company wanted, and he was told so, coarsely, with the addendum that they had never before known a Spanish *mestizo* who was so prudish. "Hoofer" O'Shane carried the subject farther by discussing, with a brutal frankness, the mothers of *mestizos,* and had Brent been actually of that class, instead of playing the part of one, the Irishman's supposed humor might have been climaxed by something equally amusing—his severe hurt. But the game had called for too much sacrifice to precipitate affairs by resenting the insult.

They finished the dinner proper at a little after nine, and, divertisement seeming necessary, the prematurely white-haired O'Shane had an amusing thought occur to him. He took his revolver from his pocket and shot the cork from a bottle of champagne which the Chinese servant had just brought in and was holding, waiting to serve. A geyser of white froth spurted up to the ceiling, and the boy immediately poured out the remainder of the wine. He was ordered to put the empty bottle on the buffet, where O'Shane and Sturmson riddled it with shots. The sport appealed to their confrères, and there was soon general shooting at each fresh bottle, in sheer drunken abandon, forgetting that they were were wasting more than they drank.

"We can—er—drink as fash as we sh-shoot!" hiccoughed "Hoofer" O'Shane, scratching his

gray hair until it tumbled into his watery eyes. He gulped at his glass, holding it out for more from the last broken-necked bottle.

The air was heavy with the smell of tobacco and burnt powder, above all the reek of the spilled liquor. Out of the noise and turmoil half-after-nine struck ominously. It was the time Lanier had set. The ex-naval officer unostentatiously arose and took Dorothy's arm.

"Come," he said.

The Chinese servants had left the room. Lanier, as he passed the door leading to the kitchen, locked it and put the key in his pocket. Dorothy leaned forward, her eyes on Brent.

"I must—speak to you," she said, falteringly. She coughed to disguise the tremor in her voice. Lanier went out and into the farther hall, and Brent joined Dorothy in the ante-room.

"They didn't tell me——" she said in a very small voice. "They didn't tell me—who was to stay. But, Brent, I—I saw it in your eyes. *You*—you can't mean to—to stay—no, no, not you!"

"I've got to stay, little girl," he said steadily. Now, now, brace up, brace up! You mustn't break down now. Think what you've already done, and we're so near success now. You must hurry off with Lanier——" He pushed the door shut and left them in darkness; then held her for a moment in his arms.

"Good-bye, dear. It doesn't really matter whether I live or not. I've lost you!"

"But you *will* live," she stated, almost fiercely. "You will live. You can't mean—"

"Well"—his lips formed a hard line—"I shan't play the coward's part and try to die. But I'm like the guttering candle now, dear—the candle that's burnt itself down, and—well, it might be a fortunate gust of wind that blew out that candle. Good-bye, dear, dear little girl."

Her arms were about his neck and his about her waist. Her soft cheek rested against his hard one, her warm lips were against his.

"Only you, dear," she said. "Only you! I'm to marry him, yes. But he—he won't know that he can never have me. For—there's no room in my heart ever—ever—— Oh, dear, dear!"

She was crying and trying to repress it. Brent brushed away her tears, soothed her. "Brace up, brace up!" he said, over and over again. He was wondering at the futility of words. That this should be the last time he would ever hold her in his arms, kiss her lips, and he had no more to say!

"Dolly," Lanier was returning, impatient at his wait.

Brent kissed her again, almost sacredly, on the forehead, and without words, only gripping his hands, she went away, leaving him with

bowed head. He stood there for several moments, then, with a certain decided movement, drew himself up stiffly at the return of Lanier.

"Get the others away as quickly as you can," said the ex-naval officer, "and keep that gang there—somehow—until you hear the siren. Three hoots of the siren, you understand—I'd like to shake hands with you. You're—you're a—good sort!"

And as Brent went back to the dining-room it seemed that his whole life had come down to those five words, "Three hoots of the siren." It was his climax; all that there was left in life for him to do.

CHAPTER XVI

THREE HOOTS OF THE SIREN

The effect of the champagne on the crowd was more apparent on his return. "Walrus" Arundsen now stood on his chair, and his speech had to do with lovely womanhood, as studied by him from the tropics to the frigid zone. In his broken English, more polygot now that he had no control of his tongue, his impassioned rhapsody was irresistibly grotesque, and Pursey Ochs, whose sense of the ludicrous defied all personal conditions of mind, was given over to a palsy of mirth. Brent, on his re-entrance, caught the eye of the newspaper-man, and nodded to him with a backward movement of the head toward the door. Ochs resumed his gravity; he arose and went out with a parting grip of Brent's shoulder. Dreen performed a similar action of leave-taking, and Schlauss Hyman muttered something of a semi-affectionate nature. And Brent found himself alone with the enemy.

It was evident that the jovial company was

not aware of its diminution. As Schlauss Hyman closed the door behind him, the "Walrus" began to troll out a drinking song, in which the others tried to join, but the eccentric voice of the big Dane, added to his frequent flat notes, prevented any noticeable swelling of the chorus. The fog-horn voice of "Hoofer" O'Shane finally drowned that of Arundsen, as the Irishman, his white hair in his eyes, his forehead shiny, his face perspiring, began to hiccough "The Wearing of the Green," which he supplemented with a fiery peroration *in re* perfidious Albion and all connected with her. "Prince Bertie" Phillips was now hopelessly drunk, so drunk that he had forgotten that he had forfeited his right to call himself a Briton, and his ire was aroused by O'Shane's Fenian utterances.

"Damn Irish—always making a bally row," he muttered. "Don't know when they're jolly well licked. We gave them—er—reg'lar out-and-outer—clinking it was the way we clouted them. Er—er—lot of Hooligans—er—er——"

"Ye lie, ye scut!" yelled O'Shane, rising in his chair, his brogue more evident in his drunkenness. "Ye lie, ye——"

"Always got their eyes out for a bally row," continued the Englishman, waving his thin-stemmed glass and spilling some of its contents on Colonel Pfferkorn, who was slumbering peacefully, his mouth open. "What were they doing before we—er—er—gave 'em right-about,

eh? Always having a beastly mill with one another. Then when we—er—er—lick 'em, they jolly well haven't got 'nough sense keep mouths shut. Rotten race, my aunt!—rotten, well rather. Talk, talk, all—er—time!"

"Talk, is it?" The Irishman kicked his chair back, and whirled toward Phillips, his fist upraised. The Englishman did not see him, but continued to mutter, staring vacantly and waving his glass. The blow did not reach him, for Brent diverted the Irishman's attention. O'Shane attempted to twist himself free, but found his wrist numb in the other's grip. He turned, swinging his left arm.

"So ye'll hold me, ye—ye half-caste!" he roared. "Ye naygur, take that!"

Again the blow did not fall. Brent had pinioned both hands now. His emotions, long repressed, broke out in a spasm of cruelty. He had suffered so much that day that there was in him the desire to hurt somebody, to make someone pay. The attempt of O'Shane to strike Phillips, helpless as the Englishman was in his vinous state, had aroused his anger, and the fact that O'Shane had called him, Brent, a "nigger," fanned his rage to a white heat. Brent knew that, as a *mestizo*, which he was supposed to be, he had to expect such epithets, but he had forgotten he was playing a part and remembered only that he was from Virginia, where a

THE IRISHMAN KICKED HIS CHAIR BACK, AND WHIRLED TOWARD PHILLIPS, HIS FIST UPRAISED

man may call another anything but that and fare better at his hands.

So the latent savagery in him was awakened, and for the first time since his bout with Dreen he let another into the secret of his strength. But with Dreen it had been different; he had endeavored not to hurt the football player. He was careless with the Irishman. The smile on his face was what his old negro nurse had been wont to call his "white laugh," a combination of a sneer and a smile without mirth, his eyes all the while cold and hard. He twisted O'Shane's wrists until the Irishman's eyes bulged, and the veins stood out in distinct blue lines against the red of his forehead. He was perspiring coldly.

He stood it with attempted defiance for nearly a minute; then broke into violent, convulsive efforts to free himself. But Brent, still smiling whitely, gave the wrists another turn.

"You called me a *nigger,*" said Brent. "Get down on your knees and take it back. Quick!"

He twisted the wrists again. With a half-shriek the Irishman sank to the floor, his trousers soaking up the spilled wine.

"It's not—och, it's murdher ye're afther—it's not meaning it, I was. Let go!"

"Say it again!"

"It's not meaning it, I was. I ask your pardon. Och, ye——"

"What?"

"'Tis nothing—just nothing at all."

Brent released him and resumed his seat. The others had been quite silent during the affair, and it had somewhat sobered them. O'Shane chafed his red wrists, casting oblique, hostile glances at the man who had shamed him with so little apparent effort.

"And this is what ye call hospitality?" he growled. "Ye had us to dinner wid ye, and then it's a foight ye're wanting. Faith! and it's hospitality I'm not liking, for one."

Looking around the room he had discovered the absence of the men he took to be Goldenbaum, Aorto, Von Klingen and Conkling.

"Sure," he continued spitefully, "it's hospitality of which ye should be proud. Five men invite us to have a bite wid 'em—and there's but one left at the table, and he assaulting his guests."

O'Shane shook his fist at the company generally.

"To the devil wid such hospitality. I'm going back to the ship."

To Brent then came the realization that in allowing his angry mood to best him he had committed an error that looked to result seriously. He came forward.

"You're not going yet, Mr. O'Shane, I hope."

"Be the powers, I'd like to see the man who'll shtop me!" defied the Irishman, moving toward the door. By a quick turn Brent put himself

between O'Shane and his means of escape, and the two men's eyes met. There was a sinister something in Brent's that made his opponent falter.

Brent was thinking, thinking rapidly. It had been close upon an hour since the others had quitted the room. Surely by this time they must be at the end of their work. His ears were strained anxiously for the siren hoots. Meanwhile O'Shane must not put his foot outside that door. On that he was determined. Even if he had to kill each separate one of the *Valkyrie's* officers, they should stay in that room until he heard the siren.

He descended to soothing the Irishman. "You mustn't go yet, old man," he said. "I can't let you go with ill-feelings. Come! I'm sorry I hurt you. We've all been drinking too much. Look over it, won't you, and let's be friends?"

He held out his hand. O'Shane ignored it.

"Come on, don't hold hard feelings," pleaded Brent. "The night's young. There's a lot of wine we haven't opened. We're all good fellows. Come on, now, get back into the game. You're not going to leave when there's plenty to drink and plenty of good fellows to drink it with. That's not like an Irishman."

"No," confirmed Phillips, laughing thickly, "thash not like Irish—not like Irish 'tall."

"I'll be going, thank ye," returned O'Shane,

stiffly. He stepped forward, but Brent had his back to the door. "What, ye won't let me?"

He turned to the "Walrus." "Captain," he said, "are ye seeing that four of yer hosts left the table, and—be the powers! 'Lisping Harry's' gone with them. There's——" Sudden suspicion was kindled in his eyes. Dimly he began to fear something, he knew not what, but there was an evil impending, and subconsciously he knew it.

He caught the "Walrus" and shook him. "There's something crooked," he said, quite sober now. "We'd better get back to the ship."

Arundsen rose, swayed a little and steadied himself. He had transmitted to him the fears of the Irishman.

"We go. We go, all of us. Now we go. Come—yah, pig!"

He struck the snoring Pfferkorn lustily on the back, and Phillips, reduced to childish horseplay by his drunkenness, seized a seltzer-siphon and sprayed the charged water on the countenance of the rubicund Swiss. Pfferkorn started up, shivering, mopped his face with his handkerchief, and taking off his gold-framed spectacles wiped them carefully. His sleep had left him sober.

"Come on," said Phillips. "We're going—back to ship," and let the seltzer descend in a cascade upon Sturm Sturmson, who was also in a comatose condition. The Norse-American

jumped and his fingers played with his tawny hair, as he stared about him in a bewildered sort of way.

"Whasr masser?" he inquired.

"Going!" replied Phillips, staring solemnly at him. "Going to jolly old ship—bride of wave-sh an' all thash sorter rot—thasher joke—laugh! O'Shane's a rotter—wansh go back ship—who wansh go back ship?"

"It is to go." "Walrus" Arundsen, who, after a calculation of equilibrium, had succeeded in getting his bearings, was steering a tolerably true course toward the door.

Brent knew he should always have that scene in his memory: the long, low-ceilinged room; a table covered with white linen, stained by the brown splotches of spilled wine and the black ashes of used tobacco, littered up with overturned and broken glasses, sodden cigarettes and burnt matches; the floor running with spilt wine; broken bottles everywhere crunching under boot-heels, as the officers came toward him; a long trail of smoke circling about the ceiling; the candles burning low in their sockets.

The lower shutters were barred, but the little ones above were open and he could see the moon outside, like a silver-gilt crescent against a curtain of blue-black, its mellow rays seemingly a spot light for Phillips, who stood balancing himself, elegant as ever, shirt-front immaculate, no strand of well-groomed hair disordered, the

light reflecting from his amethyst studs. His hand was on the shoulder of the "Walrus," in appearance his antithesis, with shirt crumpled and marks of food upon it, yellow mustache limp and reeking of liquor. Sturm Sturmson was behind him, white lawn tie undone, collar-button showing, shirt stained with wine and soaked with perspiration, and at his side Colonel Pfferkorn looked on wonderingly through his gold-framed glasses like a bewildered, benevolent schoolmaster; while, their faces almost touching, Brian O'Shane glared at Brent, his dirty white hair and red nose subjects for visual attention.

"It is to go," said "Walrus" Arundsen.

"Don't go yet, Captain!" Brent clung desperately to the pacific course. "Don't go yet."

"It is to go!" repeated the Dane, stolidly.

"No!" said Brent.

They stared at him. Brian O'Shane laughed jeeringly. "Be the powers, we've had enough of this! Now, ye scut, stand away from that door or——"

But before his hand had reached his hip-pocket both of Brent's had come out from under his tunic, holding the two black revolvers. One covered O'Shane, the other Arundsen.

"You'll stay until I let you go. Try to draw that gun, O'Shane, and I'll shoot hell out of you. Hands up, the whole bunch of you—up, I say! Get 'em up a little quicker than that!"

Sturmson and Pfferkorn had complied instantly. After a slight hesitancy, Phillips and Arundsen followed suit. But O'Shane, with his thumbs in his side-pockets, stared defiantly.

"O'Shane," said Brent, and his tone was vicious, "you put up your hands, quick!"

Abruptly the Irishman laughed. "By God, we're a pack of fools, I'm telling you. A Spaniard! Him! Will ye listen to the tongue of him? He's a damn Yankee! The crowd's all Yankees. Lanier's a Yankee. We've been foinely fooled and——"

"*Will* you put up your hands?"

"Yes—that way!" His fingers jerked out his revolver. But before it had done more than dangle there was a staccato report and a red mark showed on his forehead amidst the disordered white hair. He had gasped suddenly, his knees had doubled under him, then had fallen an awkward, sprawling heap at Brent's feet.

Brent's face was fixed, his stare stony. He watched the smoke circle upward, smelt the powder, knew that he had killed the Irishman. But that was only what must be done. Suddenly he prayed that he might not have to kill any more unarmed men. The siren—the siren! Surely it was time for that!

"He's dead," said Phillips, quite sober now, and looking down at the blood staining the white hair of O'Shane.

"Yes," replied Brent, in a matter-of-fact

tone. "I'm a good shot. The rest of you will be like him if you don't keep your hands up. I suppose you might as well know that O'Shane guessed correctly. I *am* an American. My name is Bauldwin Brent."

He knew by their expressions that they had heard of him, and was aware that his reputation would further intimidate them and keep them from rushing on death.

"The six men you came to find were drowned. We were wrecked here. We took their parts to defeat this rotten scheme of yours. Lanier had been persuaded to join us. When you hear a siren hoot three times you will know your vessel is on its way to Manila to bring American warships here. You can understand now that I must kill you if you attempt to escape."

No one spoke for some time. They *did* know, knew why he wished them to remain, knew why O'Shane had been killed, knew also the number of deaths that lurked behind the ominous circles of Brent's weapons. They had faced danger too often to court certain death.

And so they stood, motionless and silent, save for an occasional shifting of position and consequent scraping of shoes on the floor. Outside the insects of the night made their queer noises, and occasionally a lizard croaked, but these subdued sounds only tended to make the silence intense.

A harsh, shrill note severed it: it was repeated twice again. There was no mistaking its origin.

"The ship's siren!"

"They're off!" said Brent, and his smile glorified his face. "They're off—they're off!"

He slipped up his tunic and sent one of the revolvers back into the holster. With his free hand he took the key from the door and stepped outside, still keeping his revolver on his enemies. Then the door was slammed and the key turned in the lock.

He replaced the second revolver, sprang upstairs to the second landing, grabbed his rifle, bag and blanket, and came hurriedly down again. Skirting the house, he came to the baths, and to the place where the fuse to the mine began. It had been but newly soaked in kerosene that evening. He struck a match, shading it with his hands to attract no attention, and lighted the fuse.

It sputtered brightly. He watched the flame dance, on its way up the hill and over the slope. He stood tense, leaning on his rifle, listening to the curses from the house, the battering on doors and shutters. As he waited he slung his bag and blanket over his shoulder.

Suddenly it seemed that a volcano was in eruption. A mighty roar, and he clutched at the dragon tree for support, his rifle clattering to the ground. The earth swayed and from the arsenal came a brilliant, blinding flame that

seemed to wrap earth and sky in a cloud of red fire. His eyes were dazzled, and they closed involuntarily.

When he opened them all was black again. The oaths of frightened men were carried along by the evening air. Those oaths were intended for him, Brent. The men who uttered them would soon be his hunters. He wondered dully what they would do with him when they caught him, and hardly caring much, struck off through the jungle for the other side of the island.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STEALING OF THE "VALKYRIE"

LANIER-DAINGERFIELD had stood in silence for several moments after Dorothy joined him. The muscles of his face were taut, and it was with difficulty that he kept back a flow of words. He looked at the girl, frail, slight, boyish in her white uniform, the moonbeams lighting up her yellow hair.

"What did you say to Brent?" he asked.

She turned swiftly on him. "What is that to you?" she replied with spirit. She was in no mood to be questioned on the subject which had made her heart so sick.

"Do you care for Brent?" he questioned.

"I have promised to marry *you*. That should be enough," was her answer, and she walked several paces from him.

"Dorothy!" he said, and his arms went about her. She was filled with a feeling of repulsion which she dared not show, knowing something of what men are capable of doing when they are madly jealous. She suffered his caresses and his kiss; then:

"The others are coming," she said. It was hard to keep some semblance of gladness out of her voice, but he was far too much in love to see that. He released her, as Pursey Ochs stepped from the veranda and came up to them. He was followed by Dreen and Hyman.

"We're all here," was Lanier's curt greeting, "and we'd better lose no time carrying out our plan. Come!"

There was little said. They followed him down the wooded slope, stumbling over tree-trunks and through tangles of vine and herbage. Once Hyman's foot was caught, but he was on his feet before the others noted his fall.

They came out into the moonlight again, and the black hulk of the wrecked schooner loomed before them on the saw-teeth of the pink reef. The moon had made a silver maze of the waters; now and then little fishes leapt to the surface, throwing out trails of liquid phosphorescence like the coloring of an orange against the silver. Out to sea the *Valkyrie* seemed a thing suspended in a mystic haziness, her few lights glimmering like the baleful eyes of some monster of the deep.

From the barracks came the sounds of noise and revelry. The several barrels of rum had been broached and the soldiery had done the rest. They were shouting out some sailors' choruses now, and the enchanted distance soft-

ened their rough notes into tinkling melodies before they reached the ears of the listeners:

"See there she stands and waves her hand,
Upon the quay,
And every day while I'm away
She waits for me,
And whispers low when tempests blow,
For Jack, at sea,
Yo-ho, my boys, yo-ho-ho."

The glamour of the scene was upon them. They stood watching the cobwebby shadows of the forest, swinging, pendulous things of shade, and then away to the moonlit waters. The music out of nothingness was like a charm. The soft drone of the night insects supplied an orchestra.

Lanier-Daingerfield, by virtue of his leadership, was the first to pull himself together, and his eyes traversed the stretch of white sands. "There's the boat," he said, and pointed a little way up the beach. "And there are those Chinese rascals fast asleep in the sand. Come along."

He ran ahead, his shadow bobbing before him like an attendant elf disporting itself on the sands. They followed his flying tunic, and came up breathless while he was shaking the four Chinese sailors out of their slumbers. Once awake, they were quite active, and when the five

Americans had clambered into the boat, the sailors rolled up their trousers and waded out, pushing the boat before them. Out of the shallows they climbed in and unshipped their oars, as Lanier took the tiller ropes. The still water cut by the sharp prow bubbled up like little waves of fire.

But the supreme beauty of the thing only made Dorothy Gordon more conscious of her sadness, for she remembered other such moonlit nights as these on which she had strolled along that white-sanded beach with Brent, and listened to his tales of travel by land and sea. Still there was a little mournful pride mixed with her sorrow, for she knew that she, too, had gone through perilous adventures and played a man's part, and now by her own act alone was doing for her country as much as it was possible for a woman to do.

The accommodation ladder was still down when the boat dashed up to it, and a sailor scrambled from the deck to receive their flying rope, which he made fast. The five conspirators clambered out on the ladder.

Lanier had left Dorothy to her own devices and was talking to Dreen. "You look like you could strike a good blow with your fist," he said, "and you'll have to do it, because I don't want to hurt Christian. He's not a bad sort. I'll go up to talk to him, and while he's engaged with

me, you give him a right-hand swing behind the ear. You understand?''

Dreen nodded affirmation and they scrambled on deck. The officer had come down from the bridge and was pacing the main deck with his hands behind him, a short pipe in his mouth. ''Now!'' said Lanier.

At the sound of their soft shoes on the deck, Christian turned and raised his hand in salute, then gravely continued his pacing. Dreen and Lanier approached him, and the latter laid a hand on his shoulder.

''Hello, Christian!'' he said, with drunken familiarity, a condition which he was very well able to assume.

The Swede turned and stared at the lurching form of his companion, but did not remove the pipe from his mouth. Dreen slipped behind him.

''Too much schnapps is not goot,'' said Christian, sententiously, letting two twin clouds of smoke pour from his wide, upturned nostrils. He took the pipe from his mouth and spat through a vacant space where four teeth had been. Before he had replaced the pipe, Dreen, lightly balancing himself, launched out in the deadening pivot-blow, turning on his heel and catching the Swede behind the ear with the full force of arm and body. The pipe fell to the deck and rolled over, the hot ashes smouldering,

and there also lay Hendrik Christian, sprawled out like a dismembered frog.

Lanier trod down the fire, and picking up the pipe, knocked out the remainder of its contents and thrust it into the pocket of Christian's reefer. "He's keen on that pipe," said the ex-naval officer, and shook the Swede roughly. He did not respond.

"Come, we'll carry him to his cabin." Lanier knelt, catching Christian's feet, while the other took his head. The members of the party and the Chinese sailors on watch looked on stolidly. Pursey Ochs lighted a cigar and stared away at the lights twinkling on the island. None of the conspirators were over-fond of blows delivered from the back.

As Lanier emerged on deck he shouted for Lim-Sha, the boatswain, and one of the Chinese sailors hurried below and awakened that dignitary. Lim-Sha shuffled up in pajamas and grass-straw slippers, sleepy-eyed, and with a look of injury.

"Wantchee me, Claptain?" he inquired, still with his injured air. It had been a constant source of anger to "Walrus" Arundsen to hear his first officer referred to by the title which, on the *Valkyrie,* he felt that he alone should bear.

"Yes, Lim-Sha," replied Lanier, briefly. "I take command here now. We go away chop-chop. Catchee all crew, swing up boat to davits, take up ladder, get under way. You savvy?"

"Yes, master; me savvy." Lim-Sha asked no questions. He worshiped Lanier, and had effective methods of bringing the Chinese crew to acquiescence with his ideas. Lanier's orders were always far more promptly carried out than Arundsen's.

"Now?" asked Lim-Sha, moving away.

"Qui-qui," returned Lanier, briefly. "You send three piecee fire-men to the engine-room, too. Qui-qui!"

As the boatswain hurried off at an accelerated gait, Lanier turned to Pursey Ochs.

"Heeled?" he asked.

"Two guns—Colts. Both loaded for bear." Ochs was learning brevity in this hard school.

"Come on, then." Lanier moved off. "The rest of you stay where you are."

The two men plunged into the semi-darkness of the deck saloon and down the broad, brass-covered stairs to the level of the cabins. Passing down the passage, Lanier opened a door which led down winding, spiral steps, into a maze of steel machinery and brass fittings. The machinery was working ponderously and the place was hot. On a small chest at the bottom of the stairs sat a man in a thin white rowing shirt, a pair of white trousers and white shoes. He was playing solitaire and keeping one eye on a brace of dirty stokers who stood before the roaring furnace below, which produced the

power to make these engines things of life. At the approach of the two he looked up.

"Hello, Gillespie!" said Lanier. "She's still under steam, is she?"

"She is," returned the Scotchman, a clean-looking young fellow (for all his surroundings), with a close-clipped sandy mustache, "and a sinfu' waste of guid coal it is, mon Lanier. I thought ye were roistering on shore."

"I've got orders to get the ship under way, and make for Manila," returned Lanier. "Don't wait to get up enough steam, Gillespie. Just let her go with what little you have until we're a bit away from the island. Then we can anchor and you can get all the steam you want."

The engineer eyed him suspiciously. "Are ye joking the noo, Lanier?" he asked.

"Devil the joke," returned the first officer.

"Then ye must know I canna get the ship under way wioot orders from the captain and my chief—and he that ill wi' the fever that Wallace MacCullom, who is somewhat of a sawbones, can do naught with him, and I'm fearing the auld man's near to death—wi' ye roistering on shore!" he added, scornfully.

"I've brought a man aboard who can cure him," said Lanier, suddenly remembering Hyman. "A regular doctor he is, although I didn't know it until to-night. But now, Gillespie, here's your three extra men. Set them and your stokers and coal-passers to work and

get up the steam. Quick, man! I've got my orders and I haven't time to lose."

"I canna," replied the Scot, stubbornly. Lanier nodded to Pursey Ochs, who interpreted his gesture and acted accordingly.

It was a moment that should not be forgotten, for it marked the downfall of the Pursey Ochs that was, the law-abiding, fight-hating, peace-loving Ochs, who had thundered against imperialism, against the force of arms, against strength and brute force. This was another Pursey Ochs, who was some twenty pounds lighter than the peace-loving one, not to mention some degrees harder; this was a lawless one, who grinned while he trampled upon all that he and the *Daily Star* of St. Louis, Mo., had held sacred; for it was with his customary cherubic smile that Pursey Ochs thrust the cold muzzle of a Colt under the ear of Bruce Gillespie and held it there.

"I just hate to do it, Gillespie," said Lanier, apologetically, "but orders are orders, and you've just got to start the machinery and that's all there is to it. Take your choice or have a pellet jingle against your brain-pan. It's just as you like. I'll give you two minutes to decide in."

He pulled his watch out by the fob, and held it in his hand. The Scot said nothing, scraping at the oil-stained floor with the point of his can-

vas shoe. The by-play was hidden from the stokers and firemen around the angle.

Lanier snapped his watch-case shut and looked questioningly at the engineer.

"I'll do it," growled the young Scotchman. "It's no canny for a man to lose his life when he has but yin forbye. Tak yon bit pistol from ahint my ear—I'll do it."

"Right," said Lanier. "You've got sense, Gillespie. I'll just leave this gentleman here to keep you company in case you get lonesome. What's the use of putting back the revolver, Ochs? It looks better in the light. You understand—*I* trust Mr. Gillespie, but if it should chance that my trust is misplaced I know I have you here."

Pursey Ochs grinned his comprehension, and fondled the Colt, keeping one gimlet eye acutely alert for any trickiness. Lanier went up the corkscrew stairs and disappeared at the top.

Gillespie was giving instructions in a tone of voice very different from the mild one he had used in the conversation. The stokers, firemen and passers were quickly on the alert, and the furnace-room below became a scene of activity. The great fires, half-smouldering, crackled under the coal heaped upon them, and breathed out blue flame, which presently became a hot, roaring red again. Valves squeaked and emitted steam, rods worked up and down with the energy of rattans plied by angry schoolmasters.

Through it all Gillespie sat with his hand on the indicator, the bell-tubes communicating from above swinging close to his ear. Twice Lanier, from the bridge, shouted down instructions to him, and twice he made the angry reply that he was not yet ready.

In an interval he turned and, for the first time, in the red glow from the furnace fire, Pursey Ochs got a good look at his craggy forehead, his insignificant nose and his shock of sandy hair. To say he gazed in wonderment was to put it mildly, and to add that Gillespie's gaze was quite as surprised and shocked was still to be inadequate.

When Ochs got his breath he managed to gasp: "Bruce Gillespie—Bruce Gillespie!" Then: "What in the name of the lamb's hind foot are you doing out here, you disreputable scavenger?"

To which the astounded engineer replied quite as courteously. "And ye—ye fat tub—what are ye? Am I worse off for a wee drappie of whuskey, or are ye that degraded J. P. Ochs?"

"Right you are!" replied Pursey Ochs. "It's myself I am, though not fat—only a trifle stout. How are you, disreputability?"

The two shook hands and Gillespie eyed him in dubiety.

"But for all that my love for you surpasseth that of man, I'll have no hesitation in dislocating your mental pabulum, my chick," re-

marked Ochs, cheerfully, glancing down at the revolver.

Gillespie gave another order, and cursed two firemen with such lustiness that they fell to trembling.

"And now," said Pursey Ochs, "what in Heaven's name brought the son of the wealthy manufacturer of calamity carts down to running an engine on a pirate—hey? When I left St. Looey there was the big sign still over the Gillespie factory, "Go Gassing in a Gillomobile," making the moon look insignificant, and thousands of your mortuary machines making mischief for the morgue. And here I find you."

Gillespie gave some more orders, and did not immediately explain. When he did, it was sadly. "Whuskey, my friend, whuskey," he said. "I drank all the whuskey in San Francisco, and when I awoke I was shanghaied on board a ship for Japan. They robbed me of my money, and I landed in Nagasaki wioot a groat. I went to the Consul's and told him who I might be, but my clothes were against me, and he laughed and hinted I had a drappie tae much. Sae there was naught to do but gain a poseetion of some kind which would gi' me enough siller to mak mysel' look respectable and tak me back to 'Frisco, and being a first-class marine engineer, I applied, and was takken on this ship. And so ye have it, Pursey Ochs, forbye."

He stared at the newspaper man penitently

and shouted something back to Lanier through the tube.

"And what of ye?" he asked. "Ye, the mon of peace, who would hae yer country gi' up warr entirely. Ye wi' a pistol trained upon a peacefu' mon!"

He continued to stare at Ochs, whose eyes dropped beneath his gaze and who was, for once, at a loss for an answer.

Meanwhile the boatswain, Lim-Sha, had brought the crew out of their bunks, and the anchor cable was slowly warped up. Lanier, on the bridge, shouted his instructions, while Dreen, Hyman and Dorothy stood at different points of the ship, revolvers in hand to use if necessary. From the cabin of the imprisoned engineer, Raeburn, came a frantic clamor, but Wallace MacCullom, the other, was too busy with his feverish chief, old MacTavish, to bother about the roar outside. He had long ago decided that the other officers were godless, and was not surprised at any uproar they might make.

Christian, who had come out of the swoon brought on by Dreen's blow, was making vigorous and unsuccessful attempts to get out of the cabin in which he was confined, and his hoarse Swedish protestations swelled the tumult. But the crew of Celestials had been under Lanier's command before, and Lim-Sha had taken Lanier on trust. It was not for them to

ask questions. The great engines down below were throbbing and pulsating; the ship quivered at every revolution.

"Stand by!" shouted Lanier; then down the tube: "Full speed ahead."

Slowly, with many snorts and puffs, the great ship plowed out toward the sea. Lanier, catching the siren lanyard, pulled it hard. The raucous note came forth three times.

Dorothy Gordon, in the excitement of the moment, ran to Dreen.

"We're moving. We're moving. We're going—at last!"

"Yes," said Dreen, and his tone sobered her. She looked back toward the island. The lights glimmered in the bungalow. In that same bungalow was the one man in all the world for whom she could ever care; the man she had given up; the man who had stayed behind to die. The girl on the ship; the man on the island; both burnt offerings on the altar of their country's welfare.

"Brent, oh Brent!" she moaned, and turned her face away from the island to the silent silver sea. Behind her lay her life, her love; before her nothing.

But first, last, and all the time—her country!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PLANNING IN MANILA

THERE was no rest for the adventurers that night. Lanier, as the only navigator of the lot, was forced to keep the bridge through the long hours, while the others had little desire for sleep, fearing as they did a recapture of the vessel. The stealing of the *Valkyrie* had been such a bloodless affair that they doubted almost that it had really been done.

They pulled steamer chairs out of one of the store-rooms and reclined in them, their revolvers ready to hand. They could hear the creak of the machinery, the guttural chants of the Chinese sailors, and every now and then a vigorous protest from the imprisoned Raeburn and Christian. Some two hours after putting out to sea MacCullom made an outcry, and as he had hitherto been silent, Dreen went to investigate his reasons for drawing attention to himself.

"There's a fever-stricken mon in here," said MacCullom through the keyhole, "and I've na mair ice for him. Wull ye na let me oot?"

Dreen went below to fetch some ice, and notified Hyman on the way. The doctor, keen to put his professional skill to use, went within the chief engineer's cabin and was soon issuing orders to the astonished MacCullom.

"No wonder he has the fever!" shouted the little doctor. "It's a mercy he didn't die under such treatment. You must be crazy."

"What do ye ken of the fever?" asked the astonished MacCullom.

"I am Schlauss Hyman—Dr. Hyman," returned the other with dignity, and the rest of his night was spent with MacTavish to such good effect that the dawn found the old man conscious, and with his temperature reduced ten degrees.

Ochs was very busy in the moonlight with a pencil and pad. He was writing a long dispatch, which he was going to send to the *Daily Star* of St. Louis, and his mind was abstracted as he framed the same, endeavoring to get in all the necessary details without unduly increasing the income of the cable companies, who received press matter from Manila at seventy-five cents per word, gold. Dreen was talking to Dorothy, but she did not hear what he was saying. She was thinking of the man back on the island.

Presently she got up and went to the other side of the ship, where she was alone. The moonlight shone upon her as she clasped her hands over the rail, the gentle, soothing moon-

light that somehow seemed to bring her nearer to the man she loved.

Presently she prayed, prayed that the man she loved might be spared, that the Unknown God might guard him and keep him from harm until they should return with the rescue party.

"Oh, Brent, Brent, dear!" she wept. "What shall I do if you are killed?—what shall I do?"

She had been brave for long, but now the woman in her was uppermost, and she broke down. Covering her head with her arms and resting on the rail of the ship, her frame was shaken with sobs, and tears, hot, scalding tears, wetted her cheek.

Then, exhausted by her torrent of grief, she stumbled back to her steamer chair and presently fell into an uneasy sleep.

At six o'clock one of the Chinese stewards brought up some toast and coffee for those on deck, and they gulped down the warm fluid and ate the toast gratefully. Pursey Ochs, who had been writing and crossing out all night, thrust the manuscript into his pocket, and made away with two orders of toast and coffee, afterwards lighting a great black cigar. He was looking as fresh and rosy as though the night had given him a comforting sleep.

Dorothy asked the steward to show her to a cabin, and she went within, ordering a bath as she did so. When she had bathed, reattired herself and arranged her hair, she came up on

deck again. Lanier saw her from the bridge, and called Lim-Sha, bidding him take several sailors and give him a sight of the rebellious Christian. In compliance, the Swede was brought out, very sulky and sleepy-eyed, and ascended to the bridge, which Lanier still paced. The latter gave him good-morning and bade Lim-Sha stand back with his men.

"Now, Christian," said Lanier, cheerfully, "the nose of this vessel is turned toward Manila. We shall arrive there to-morrow sometime. If you prefer to go into Manila a prisoner and be handed over to the Philippine authorities on charge of conspiracy, just say so. If you want to throw your fortunes in with us, you will go scot-free and probably get a reward for being a good boy. If you refuse, I shall lock you up and keep you locked up until we get to Manila. Then you'll be landed in Bilobid prison. Take your choice, my boy. I'd like to have you. You're the only other navigator aboard and I'm tired of being on the bridge all the time."

The fourth officer eyed him for some time, then he nodded his head. "Vat choice is it you give me?" he inquired. "It is no choice. Am I a vool? Nein. I will take my watch."

"Good boy!" said Lanier, encouragingly, and told him the story of the seizure. "But, remember, Chris, if you so much as alter the

course of this vessel by half a point I'll clap you in the black-hole, or my name is Jones."

"Am I a vool?" returned Christian, sulkily.

Lanier followed Lim-Sha below and gave the Chinese instructions to watch Christian. He came up to Dorothy.

"I have conquered!" he said, exultantly. "For your sake, Dolly. To-morrow we will be in Manila, and——"

He would have embraced her, but the others were in sight, and he had a sense of the fitness of things. "I'm going below to get some sleep," he finished. "I'll see you later."

The day sped on uneventfully. They breakfasted at eight, after which Pursey Ochs and Dreen played with quoits on deck, while Dorothy tried to read a novel which she found in the saloon. Hyman was still hovering over his patient, MacTavish, and found only time to take a bath and snatch some breakfast. At one they had "tiffin" and the pleasure of Lanier's company. He was in white duck trousers and a blue, brass-buttoned, gold-braided coat, with immaculate white scarf and linen, and all acknowledged tacitly that he was to the manner born, and handsome at that. But Dorothy saw nothing in him but the one who stood between her and the man she loved.

Lanier relieved Christian on the bridge, and Christian came down, but avoided any companionship with the others. He took dinner with

them at seven o'clock, after which he relieved Lanier, who accompanied Dorothy to the deck, and tried to get her into a secluded corner, but Dorothy, fearing what must come and anxious to put it off until the last moment, called Dreen to her side, much to Lanier's displeasure. Dreen, elated with this sign of favor, stuck closer than a brother until ten o'clock was passed, and Dorothy announced her intention of "turning in," which she did. Lanier and Dreen sat up and exchanged honeyed words, each having a concealed sting within.

All in all it was a most uneventful voyage. Nothing happened of any consequence; the crew was well behaved; Raeburn and MacCullom, the engineers, when released that morning, showed themselves very tractable, and took turns relieving Gillespie in the engine-room. Ochs and Gillespie spent much time together arguing religious questions, and as both had remarkable faculties for keeping their tempers, they had long sittings of moment.

Mid-morning they entered Manila Bay and passed Corregidor by ten o'clock. The quarantine station at Mariveles detained them longer, and the customs authorities the longest, inasmuch as their papers did not in the least correspond with their destination and cargo. The papers stated that the *Valkyrie* was bound from Nagasaki to Singapore with assorted notions and farm machinery, and when the machinery

was found to be rifles and carbines the customs authorities looked askance.

"See here," said Lanier to the Inspector of Customs, who had come aboard, "I can't stay here and explain all this to you. This is a very serious matter, and I've got to see the General commanding about it. Take possession of the ship, and I'll leave one of the officers aboard. The rest of us must go ashore."

The customs man consented to this and put his cutter at the disposal of Lanier and his companions. The little steam launch shot up the Pasig, dodging innumerable *cascos* and *lorchas,* and finally landed them at the customs dock. Here they took a *banca* to get to the other side of the city, where lay Fort Santiago, and some fifteen minutes later they stood in the ante-room of the Commanding General, Division of Luzon.

They were admitted presently and faced a smooth-shaven, ruddy-faced man with grey-black hair and a military mustache, twisted upward after the fashion of the Kaiser. Lanier involuntarily saluted, and the salute was returned gravely. The General eyed their uniforms, now somewhat the worse for three days' wear, and looked at them curiously.

"General," said Lanier, "my name is Daingerfield. This is Miss Dorothy Gordon, Mr. J. P. Ochs, Dr. Schlauss Hyman, and Mr. Hopworth Dreen."

The General involuntarily straightened in his

chair. "Eh?" he exclaimed, and put on his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, which he had held between thumb and forefinger. He looked them over critically. "Are you—why, of course, you are—you are the passengers who were lost from the *Sultana*. I am happy, indeed, to see that you were not drowned."

He had been on his feet since Miss Gordon's name was mentioned, and now he offered her his hand. He shook hands with all the others, and smiled quizzically. Then a new thought came to him.

"But where?" he asked in some alarm, "is my good friend, Mr. Brent? Don't tell me that he is lost?"

Dorothy's eyes filled with tears. "We don't know yet, General," she said, and put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I think," said Lanier, "that the sooner we tell the story, General, the better. Mr. Ochs can tell you the first part of it, I the last. Go ahead, Ochs."

Ochs, in short, tense sentences, denuded of his customary embellishments, told of the typhoon, of their finding the island—the General sat erect—of the arsenal, the dead bodies, their resolve to play the parts, the coming of the *Valkyrie* and their welcoming of it.

"Mr. Ochs," said the General, when the gentleman from St. Louis brought his narrative to a close with a wave of his hand toward Lanier,

"you tell a story that—" (he was highly agitated)—"that would seem——." The General turned to Lanier.

"General," said Lanier-Daingerfield, "I was an officer on the *Valkyrie*. I accepted the position in Japan. When I accepted it, it was with the idea of somehow thwarting the ends of the expedition." Here Lanier lied and the others knew that he lied. "On my arrival at the island I recognized Miss Gordon and she asked me to help her and her companions. We seized the cruiser that night and came here. The crew is Chinese and is devoted to me. Our only regret was that we were forced to leave Mr. Brent behind to see that none of the other officers came to the ship before we had her under way."

The General was on his feet. "Then Bauldwin Brent is still on the island? We must rescue him! He did me a good turn at Malolos." His tones were very grave.

After the expected silence that ensued, the General spoke again: "Miss Gordon and gentlemen, you have done your country a great service, one that cannot be adequately recognized. I will call my staff together now, and we will decide what plans to pursue." He touched a bell and a clerk entered.

"The transports *Samar* and *Leyte* are still at the dock, Tregallas?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Telephone immediately to the Quartermaster that under no circumstances are they to leave to-day, and ask the Quartermaster to come to my office at once. Telephone the Navy Yard at Cavite and ask for Lieutenant-Commander Colcourt of the *Arizona,* and ask him to come over here immediately. Then, if you can, get the Admiral on the wire and tell him I would like a few moments' conversation with him."

He waved his hand and the clerk left the room.

"You will arrange with the customs officials with regard to the *Valkyrie?*" asked Lanier. "Remember that she is an armored vessel and if you put a gun-crew aboard her, and some naval officers, she can do a lot of good."

"I'll remember that," said the General.

He seemed absorbed for the moment, then he turned to the five. "You can do little now except wait until we have our conference. I should advise your going to the Pacific Mail Office and claiming your luggage and valuables and then going to the Oriente Hotel."

Ochs paused at the door. "General," he said, the newspaper-man coming uppermost, "I am wiring the entire story to the *St. Louis Star* this morning. May I ask that you give no information to newspaper-men until to-morrow morning."

"Certainly," replied the General. "But be mild in your strictures upon Japan. Remem-

ber that we can't yet afford to have an open rupture with the treacherous little hounds." He looked as though his language would not have been so moderate had Miss Gordon not been present.

It was Dorothy who paused now, and regarded the others with some embarrassment. "I wish," she said, "that someone would go to the Pacific Mail people and get my suit-case with the green labels—that has the dresses I wore aboard the steamer. And can't you put a room at my service here to change in?" she asked the General. "I don't care to walk into the Oriente in these clothes."

"Your clothes and valuables are not there, Miss Gordon," said the General. "Your aunt went back to Hong-Kong on the same steamer and took all your things with her."

Dorothy's face clouded. "Then," and she hesitated painfully, "someone will have to buy me some clothes and trust me until I can wire home to my bankers and get an answer."

She accepted the General's immediate offer of five ten-dollar gold-pieces and bade him good-morning. The five left with his instructions to return by three o'clock and be ready to sail at six that evening.

Dorothy got into a *carromata* outside, and told the others that she would meet them at the Oriente. She had previously asked the General's advice as to where to go for clothes, and

her *carromata* was soon rattling down the Escolta. It stopped before what looked like a country store, selling everything from shoestrings to steam-plows. There were a number of male clerks, and several American women. Dorothy put herself into the hands of one of the latter, and emerged some little while later in crisp duck clothes, a white lace hat, canvas pumps, white stockings and a white parasol and gloves, leaving instructions to send more of the same to the hotel.

When she arrived at the hotel she registered and took lunch later with her four companions. All eyes were upon them, and their lunch was several times interrupted by the visits of the reporters of the local papers, with inquiries as to the way in which they had evaded death. Ochs, true to his news instincts and desire for a "beat," had rehearsed them in what to say, and they replied that they had been picked up by a vessel going to Singapore.

Lanier tried to draw her apart after lunch, but she went to her room and did not rejoin them until it was time to return to Fort Santiago. It was intensely hot in the sun of noonday, and the street was almost deserted. When their *carromatas* rattled into the courtyard of the fort they were saluted by a sleepy-looking guard.

They found in the General's office an array of notables gathered about the table. There

was the Admiral commanding the South Pacific Squadron, the commandant of the Navy Yard, several naval officers, the Quartermaster-General, the Colonel of the 289th and one of his majors, and several of the General's aides.

The *muchachos* put chairs for them to join the group and handed them ice-water in thin glass goblets, after which they retired. The Admiral, looking suddenly at Daingerfield, spoke:

"You were Lieutenant Henry Lanier-Daingerfield, were you not?"

"Yes," replied Lanier-Daingerfield, holding his head erect. "Courtmartialed for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. But I am here to serve my country to-day, Admiral, even if I am deprived of my citizenship."

The Admiral remained silent, pulling at his beard. Briefly the General Commanding explained the plans which the council had decided upon.

The Admiral would provide officers, gunners and marines for the *Valkyrie,* which would also carry two companies of the 289th, while the transport *Samar* would carry the other battalion and a half. Majors Fenpenny and Chisholm were to command the first and second battalions, respectively, Colonel Parr to command both. Lieutenant David Phelps of the U.S.S. *Manitou* would take command of the *Valkyrie,* with Lieutenant Briggs, and Ensigns Hurrt and

Collins. Lieutenant-Commander Alfred Colcourt, commanding the *Arizona,* would make up the fleet with his vessel, carrying an augmented crew and an additional complement of marines under Captain Wagner, U.S.M.C. The fleet was to sail at six o'clock that night, and Dainger-field was to act as pilot.

"Do you wish to go back or remain in Manila?" the General asked of the others.

"Go back!" returned the others, in chorus. The officers smiled, and Ochs turned to Dorothy Gordon.

"You are not to go back," he said, with an appearance of calmness.

Dorothy eyed him so scornfully that he wilted, and did not reopen the subject.

When they had passed out of the room and gone below to their *carromatas* Lanier-Dainger-field helped the girl to ascend. Before she understood his intentions, he had jumped in by her side and bade the driver proceed to the Church of Saint Beateria.

"But I must hurry back to the hotel," said the girl, "and make ready to go."

"You are not going back!" said Lanier, firmly.

She looked at him for a moment, then called to the *cochero* to stop.

"I gave you no right to influence my actions," she said, "and I *am* going back on the *Valkyrie.*"

"Then," he said, desperately, "you must go back as my wife. And that is why I want to go to St. Beateria."

The *carromata* had stopped and the slit-eyed *cochero* was peering in at them.

"You intend to go back on your promise?" asked Lanier, fiercely.

She shook her head. "Only I must wait until all has been accomplished," she said. "There is no manner of use in your protesting. I will not marry you now."

His face was almost piteous. "Dolly!" he said. "Dolly, I want you so badly!"

He poured out a long declaration, to which she listened unmoved. "When we return to Manila," she replied, immovably. "*Cochero,* Hotel Oriente!"

The *carromata* rattled off. Lanier spoke not a word during the journey. When the carriage drew up he looked at her sadly:

"Very well," he said, "I suppose I can wait. I've waited so long, anyway."

They went into the hotel together.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MAN-HUNT

It was in mid-afternoon, the third day after the stealing of the *Valkyrie,* that the sun shone through a break in the cocoa-palms and presented a yellow-lighted space of *chaparral* on the slope of a hill which overlooked the reef on which the schooner had been wrecked. Through this *chaparral* Brent was slowly plodding, his head hung low, his mouth dry as cracked leather. He gained the hill-crest by an effort that was only half-physical, the rest sheer determination. Passing out of the sunlight, the prickly branches of low-lying trees tore his face; the tangled, thorny bushes maltreated the upper part of his legs, the parts unprotected by his hip-boots. On the crest he sank down in the shelter of a dragon tree. His eyes, weary, hopeless, sought the sea. It was very pitiless in the afternoon sun, so placid and calm, stretching away unbroken for countless miles, spanned only by the blue horizon. His wild hope had been that it would perhaps have sign of a ship. Soon it would hardly

matter whether a ship came or not, so far as he was concerned.

He ripped from his tunic a long strip of white drill. Dividing this, he doubled one part and covered with it a bleeding place, the mark of a bullet that had entered his side earlier in the day—a chance shot of the enemy. The strip he bound tightly in place with the other piece, twisting it tightly with several knots.

Given a weaker man, the figure presented would have partaken of the pitiful. It but made Brent more grim, tending to the heroic. The three days past since he had sent the arsenal redly skyward had grizzled his brown hair, seamed his face, left his tunic in loose bits that fluttered in the slight breeze. His breeches showed long rents, through which the skin was displayed, bleeding from numberless cuts and scratches, the marks of thorns and bushes; the back of his neck was burnt almost black from continual exposure to the sun.

On the night when the siren hooted he had traveled far to the other side of the island, seeking to put between himself and the enemy much distance; but there were more than five hundred to pursue, and the island lacked an even five miles in squareness. They had come up with him late in the afternoon of the second day, and night intervening alone enabled him to flee from them unperceived. That morning they had taken up the scent again, and all day

the man-hunt had been in progress, with the hound-pack in full cry, the pack that it were shame to liken to honest beagles. It was so Brent put it, for he, the hunted, had, even in his own misery, time to reflect that as he was now, so must have been the many little red foxes after which he had ridden, dogs at heel, in his native Virginia. Virginia! It was a long way off! The green valley, the lawn and the kennels where the dogs bayed; pretty women to stay for dinner under green-shaded candles, with men in pink hunting-coats and white Bedford cords. Virginia! Yes, a long, a very long way off. He doubted much that he would see Virginia again.

He had a great pain from the wound in his side. The bullet had torn itself through the fleshy part and come out through the back. That part the heat had cauterized and brought together, but the place of entrance was raw and the torn flesh bled. He had lost much blood from that place, and it was from there that the burning pain came, that sickening, weakening pain.

He had abandoned his rifle. It was too cumbersome to carry. Nor was it of use to bring down birds or game, for he feared the attraction of his enemies' attention that a chance shot might cause. For that was how they had first discovered his whereabouts. He had shot a wild green pigeon. A costly little green fellow,

that pigeon, and one whose going-off had a great revenge, bringing the whole five hundred or more on chase, spread out in a semi-circle, a drag-net that seemed sure to mesh the quarry. It had swept him relentlessly around and was bringing him back to the south side of the island, where lay the barracks and bungalow.

There are none to doubt the courage of Bauldwin Brent, but even he, you must believe, had the fear of torture. And savages' torture! He had seen the ragged recruits of Pfferkorn. These knew the man they pursued to be responsible for the failure of their expedition, the loss of their chances for loot that had warmed the cockles of their flinty hearts. Some notion had come to them of what the disappearance of the *Valkyrie* meant. They had an idea their time was short, and such of its period as was left them must be replete with punishment for the cause of their loss of prospective gain.

Brent had not lain very long behind the dragon tree before the crackling of some brush on the low hill-reaches apprised him of an advanced skirmish line of the Mamelukes. His fourth sense had returned to him in his hour of need, that sense of woodcraft by which he distinguished sounds and saw evidenced the value of little things as presages of great ones. So now he was aware that there were few of this advance-guard. When they got a little farther towards him, emerging from the *chaparral,* he

saw himself one man wrong in his calculations. There were six—a Greek in kilts, once white, red-belted and long-knifed; three English "Tommies," resting on cocobolo-wood clubs; an Irish-American deserter in United States Army khaki, corporal chevroned; and a nondescript in blue cotton clothes and a rubber collar without a tie. He carried an iron thole-pin, this nondescript, and gazed about him like a rat, with little eager eyes that were cruel and cowardly.

Brent looked down his revolver barrel, sighted it, and had a qualm of misgiving. Several times he subdued it, and lifted the revolver, but the qualm returned. He breathed heavily and addressed them:

"Keep back there, you six! Keep back now! I've got a gun trained on you. Get back to the woods. Don't be fools!"

The rat-eyed man scurried to cover and the Greek dropped to his knees and crawled away, hidden by the *chaparral*. The English soldiers cursed the fearing ones in choicest Billingsgate, the Irish-American adding some touches of Roscommon county and Mulberry Bend.

One of the cockneys looked up the hill in the direction from where Brent's voice had come:

"Ah! stryke me pink, 'oo's afryd of yer, yer bloody bounder? Blast me blimy! You oian't on Piccadilly Circus, orderin' no kebs, yer

bloke. We ain't afryd of ten of the likes of yer!''

The second took up the thread. ''I s'y, you—come out o' that, peaceable-like, naow, mister. We ain't goin' to 'urt yer. It's all in yer oeye. We ain't agoin' to 'urt' im, are we, 'Arry?''

The one addressed grinned, showing blackened teeth. ''Lord love yer, no! We ain't agoin' to 'urt yer, old pal.''

They continued to advance up the slope, '' 'Arry'' winking at the third man, who hung back. ''Come on, naow, mister, give up peaceable-like and yer don't git 'urt,'' soothed the first speaker.

The Irishman laid violent hands on the third man and dragged him after the first two. ''Come on, 'Ampstead 'Eath,'' he said, with an attempt to parody the speech of the others. ''There's the reward the Ginral is offering. What's the matter wid yer? Are ye carrying yer courage wid yer or did ye lave it to home in yer other trowsies? Come on! Git the ould badger out of his hole, bejim!''

He started forward with a rush.

''I'll shoot to kill,'' warned Brent, sternly. ''I killed one Irishman the other night. And you—you other Irishman, if you don't stand back, I'll kill you, too.''

''Then, bejim, ye've got a cha-ance!'' shouted the ex-corporal, and spurted forward, his club upraised, followed by a sharp crack and a pink-

ish puff of flame from behind the dragon tree. The Irishman threw up his hands and rolled over and over down the hill until the *chaparral* hid his body from sight. The Englishmen had rushed at the same time, and there had been as many pinkish puffs as there were now dead men stretched out, clutching clubs in nerveless fingers. Brent turned, having only time to see the Greek wriggling forward on hands and knees like a bloated hop-toad, his long knife between his teeth. The bullet that came out of the fifth pink puff, as a serpent from a bright flower, broke the teeth that held the knife, and the Greek went over on his back. As he lay there black blood bubbled like venom from a mouth that was twisted into a horrible smile.

Brent was unmoved by the slaughter. This was requital; the hunted was showing its fangs. He had offered the men their lives, and they had refused them at his hands, thinking him defenceless. Had he not killed them, they—what unspeakable things they might have done to him! He loaded his revolver, and counted the cartridges in his belt. He had twenty there, six in his revolver. Twenty-six cartridges between himself and the end. Rightly used, every cartridge meant a man's life. If they wanted his body, he would make them pay very dearly for it.

It was not altogether as one-sided as it might be, this one man against five hundred, he decid-

ed. There was a saving grace for him. The enemy possessed little ammunition. The ship's officers and General Pfferkorn's staff carried revolvers, but none of them had worn cartridge belts, so that it was to be reckoned that such an amount as the chambers held was their sole supply. And of the ammunition of the *Valkyrie's* officers, much had been exhausted in their playful attempts to make sieves of the champagne bottles at that momentous dinner. He had counted besides some twenty-nine or more shots fired at himself, only one of which had hit him. No arms had been distributed from the arsenal; none landed from the *Valkyrie*. It was plain that they could have but few shots for him now, only clubs and knives, and these not very dangerous save at close quarters. At close quarters he was very sure they would not get unless many rushed him at one time. That was to be feared. Sooner or later, he knew it must happen. But it had ceased to become terrifying, this prospect. More he thought of his wound, the wound that ached and throbbed like a severe toothache. Sometimes a crawly, greasy, creeping sensation, as though some unclean thing were pawing; then a burst of raw pain, so intense that the tears stood out in his eyes. The heat was oppressive, the flies buzzed irritatingly. His eyelids hung leadlike, craving of him that they be closed in sleep, sleep that would make the body forget its pain.

He denied their craving. To the left of him was further crackling of brush that meant more of the enemy. He must leave the hill; it was open from too many sides. They would surround him and he would be captured before he could use his twenty-six cartridges. It was necessary to find a place not so well provided with screens for the enemy, bushes and trees that kept them invisible until they were upon him. Slowly and wearily he dragged himself away.

Nearer the beach, that shone white twenty feet below, he found the path used by heavy-footed denizens of the forest. It was easy to traverse, and he would be hidden from his enemies until they should double back on his tracks. There were some trained woodsmen among them and the matter of picking up his trail was no mere lucky chance. He suspected the American deserters for that, one grizzled fellow especially who might have seen fighting against the Apaches, and (whoever he might be) had a keen nose for his scent.

It was growing late. Perhaps night would come again and grant him a respite. Then they might not be able to follow his tracks and his safety for the dark hours would be more than comparative. There was hope in that. He looked out to sea, parting the clematis.

Already the sun had sunk most of its red ball bulk, only a small segment of its rim showing

above the waters. At a space where no bushes stood to obstruct his vision Brent looked again and saw that even the rim was swallowed up by the oily water expanse that swayed like molten gold in the afterglow. But there was no sign of a ship.

He could hear shouts and curses indistinctly, and knew the drag-net was close to meshing him. Why did the afterglow linger over the land? Why did night withhold so long the sheltering protection of its black mantle? If he could but fall asleep and rest, he could forget many things—forget his wound, and his thirst. Thirst! He longed for water as only the damned must long. He had seen no stream that whole hot, blistering day.

An antelope fawn crossed his path, regarding him with startled, puzzled eyes. Only a few paces on he noted a huge python, twisting its black fire-hose coils about the girth of a camphor tree. He regarded it without even a passive interest.

Again, he saw a panther cat. It was by sheer intuition that he had paused and looked upward with dull eyes. There, spitting and mewing on an overhung branch, was the huge feline, eyeballs glaring, fur ruffled on end. Brent was too tired, too much in pain, to be afraid of anything. He wondered as he watched in a curiously impersonal way if the big cat would be able to kill him by one spring. His eyes met

the yellow ones. The panther arched its back, the ruff of white fur about the neck bristling, the whole attitude one of quivering intensity. But as Brent compelled the cat's eyes to meet his, the tail sank and drooped, the back lost its arch, the fur was no longer up-ended. Spitting with something like disgust, a little trembling as of fear, and the panther's eyes were withdrawn. It turned and gained another branch, passing out of sight. Brent watched it until it was lost in tangled branches, wondering why it had not sprung at him. He did not know that the cat had looked into the eyes of one devoid of fear and was itself afraid of such a being.

Brent kept on his way, not hurrying, for he knew that one place was as safe as another for him until the night came. And it seemed that it never would come. He grew to hate that red afterglow that crimsoned the cocoa palms, accentuating the light and shade of the forest, and making of him so conspicuous a mark. A sudden, almost unbearable, series of twinges attacked him through his wound, and he stopped, holding his hand tightly against the wad of white drill, fancying that this action in some way assuaged his pain.

It was while he stood there, with his back to the sea, his face to the forest, that a little white cloud of smoke and a staccato crack warned him of the close proximity of the hound-pack. He moved behind a tree, seeking sight of his

hidden assailant, but there was only silence to follow, and the jungle gave no sign of man. But his dull eyes saw the moving of bushes and shrubs while there was no wind. He was reminded of the moving forest that came to make an end of "Macbeth," knowing that where a bit of vegetation moved there was a man and an enemy. He fingered his revolver. There was no good of further forest flight.

It came—the attack—but he was not unprepared for it. It was a concerted movement, the half-circle drag-net, for from all sides save the one toward the sea men emerged, dashing forward. The faces of many nations, evil-eyed, cruel-lipped, were disclosed to him. He lifted his revolver and fired, shifting his aim so quickly that the six shots seemed one continuous crackle. A number of men fell, and one of his assailants answered him with a bullet that laid open his cheek. The flying phalanx of clubs was close. In the woods behind the light made a red streak of Pfferkorn's upraised sword.

Only the sea offered protection. He had not time to load again. Parting the bushes and scrambling through the thicket, he emerged on the crest of the sank-bank, a drop of some twenty feet to the sands below. This he took, lowering himself on the bank, loosing his hold, clutching at the sand as he whirled downward, in an attempt to break his fall. He landed at the bottom, badly shaken up, and one of the pur-

suers tumbled after him. Brent sought his throat and choked him into a gasping, sprawling heap. Leaving him, he ran along the beach, looking backward to see the rest of the mercenaries on the crest of the bank, hesitating at the jump. The afterglow outlined Brent's figure boldly on the white sands. He was a fair mark for a decent shot, but the bullets fired did not find their way to him.

Now some of them had nerved themselves and tumbled down. Brent was in full sight. There was only the sea, and as he looked toward it he saw the hulk of the wrecked schooner on the pink reef. It was a chance.

He tore off his ragged tunic, tightened his belt and holsters, and ran out along the shingle, wading knee-deep in the waves. As he reached the depth where the water came to his armpits a bullet splashed up a little white spray in front of him. He struck out and dived. His will was dominant. He *must* reach the schooner. For the moment his wound ceased to ache, his old strength came back to him. When he came gasping to the surface again he had traversed a considerable portion of the distance to the hulk. To his water-clogged ears came the sound of more shots. He went under for the second time, swimming with an overhand, racing stroke that ate up distance. The hulk was but a rod or so off when he again breathed air, and he swam the surface for the rest of the way. A shot tore

up a bulkhead, but it was not near enough to bother him. He caught at a trailing rope. It was rotten through long contact with the water and broke, throwing him back. His second clutch was for a porthole, and by this means he drew himself to the slippery deck, crouching down behind the wreck of the pilot-house.

And then, by wild bravado animated, he drew himself up and shook his fists at the gathering on the sands. "Yah, yah!" he jeered, and the wind blew his mockery to shore. Among the enemy there were some who found it in their hearts to admire the solitary figure on the hulk, outlined white against its black, in his dripping clothes and jack-boots. He who had eluded five hundred and who, even in his darkest hour, was not afraid of them.

When he looked again he saw that the crowd on the beach was thinning out; that they were making their way by twos and threes toward the slope leading to the bungalow and barracks. Presently the beach was clear of them.

A sea-mew squawked a plaintive note as it circled over the hulk. The note it struck returned Brent to his pain. He sank to the deck again, shivering in the cool air of evening, and the wound throbbed and throbbed until he could no longer repress himself, but shrieked aloud. The salt-water was in the bleeding place, burning, scorching it. His fingers itched to tear away the bandage and claw at the wounded sur-

face. His teeth ground together and the pupils of his eyes dilated.

He passed to the outer border of delirium. All around him were queer things. The mantle of the gloaming parted to show him tentacled monsters lurking in the sea. He felt that he must watch carefully lest one of them gain the deck and devour him. Recollection came to him of the dead sailor floating in the submerged cabin, and he wondered if the man might not, after all, be alive. Several times he went to the hatch and called down: "Sailor! Say there, you sailor! Come up here!" and laughed gratingly.

To laugh and to call out hurt his dry throat. He remembered that he must have some water to drink. All that expanse about the ship tempted him. With a little remembrance of conditions as they were, he first resisted his desire for it, but after awhile his mind was given to the unreal things, and the water seemed delightfully cool and inviting. He immersed his fevered body in it and took great gulps of the brine. When he again gained the deck he was chattering senilely. Now it seemed that he had been right. The sailor in the cabin was not dead. He came up the hatchway, a ghastly figure, trailing seaweed; little water-rats on his shoulders blinking with red-rimmed eyes. And the madman, afraid, sprang upon him and hurled him back again. He thought that the

red-eyed rats had bitten his hand, but he had only torn it upon a nail.

As the salt water brought a fever more violent, the monsters of the deep grinned at him from the sides of the hulk, and bat-winged, vampiric ghouls of the air showed him teeth that were blackened and dripping red. He shrieked for them to leave him, but they put out cold claws and fondled him. He reloaded his revolver, dry now, chuckling. He would soon drive away these uncanny phantoms. They did not know the power contained in that revolver of his. He popped at them. So great his trust in his weapon that it subverted his madness, and they disappeared. So he chuckled more and derided them.

In the western sky the moon shone a silver crescent. By its light he saw a boat putting off from shore, a boat full of men holding clubs. Reason and knowledge of past events had fled him, but there was present in him a great distrust of all things, and he knew them for enemies.

He spread his cartridges on the deck, one by one, bottoms up, and counted them, counted them as a child counts its lead soldiers. They seemed to have some magic property in themselves. The remembrance that their utility was only when within the revolver had by now gone from him—even that. Somehow, by sitting there and counting these little round-pointed

things, he fancied himself working a magic spell against his enemies.

As the boat drew up under the bows of the hold his incantations became faster and more furious. He gibbered, waving his hand over the circle of cartridges. But with the appearance of a man's head and shoulders over the bows, he knew his magic was not good. So he lost his last vestige of faith, and became no more than a wounded wolf, that bares its teeth before the pack.

The man came to deck, swinging a club. He struck Brent close to his wound. And then the madman's tongue lolled out, a red, snaky thing, and he spewed saliva, chewing it into bubbles of froth. He dashed his fist into the man's face, tumbling him over backward. In his movement he missed the gleam of steel as Pfferkorn's sword sliced the air about him. The Swiss had swung around to strike again. The madman collided with him and they fell to the deck together. The shining sword caught his eye, and he grabbed the blade with his naked fingers. They streamed red, but he no longer knew pain, and wrested the sword from the Swiss, cutting his own hand to the bone. He was up again to face the oncoming press, and slashed the steel across a man's neck, so that the head toppled forward, hanging by a bit of skin, for which its weight was overmuch. It fell, striking the deck like an over-ripe cocoanut, and the blood from

the severed trunk gushed crimson against the wave-washed planking.

There were others behind him, but they stood away, crowding one another backward. The sight of the madman, his hair in his eyes, his teeth gleaming ghoul-fashion, sent superstitious thrills through them. Two men sprang into the sea and grabbed at the gunwales of the row-boat.

"Get the hell off! Get the hell off!" choked that which was once John Bauldwin Brent, his sword a circlet of flame. They were paralyzed by his onslaught. One man lifted a cocobolo-wood club in dull defense, breaking the sword half-way. Brent jammed the broken blade into his enemy's open mouth, and the man splashed heavily over the side. The shortened blade was launched straight for the mouth of Sturm Sturmson now, but the Norse-American, with a wild yell, cleared five feet at a standing jump and landed flat on the water.

"He's mad—he's crazy-mad. He's running amuck!" yelled Sturmson, his mouth full of water.

They thought so, too, those in the boat. Pulling Sturmson in, they unshipped their oars. But the madman had dropped the sword, and, looking about him for a larger weapon, spied the steering-wheel that had been torn loose by the storm. With the strength of his madness he lifted the great mass of wood and iron high

in air and hurled it into the boat. Some had been prepared and leaped. Others went down with the boat, crushed out of all recognizance.

Brent, picking up the broken sword, grinned at them, his head over the side. The survivors shivered and struck out for shore. The attack was ended.

And now, in mad exultation, he would fain dance wildly to celebrate his victory. It was a sailor's jig to a tuneless melody. But he was soon tired, and some other dance appealed. He glided into a waltz:

"Slumber on, my little gypsy sweetheart,
Slumber on, slumber on."

He put his hand to his eyes, as remembrance wakened again to sudden life from the great excitement. Someone had sung it—a girl—Dorothy!

With the return of his senses came the great reality of his pain. He staggered, shading his eyes from the moon. His sword clattered to the deck, his knees bent, and he rolled down the companionway and lay stretched starkly on the stairs.

CHAPTER XX

THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN

The pink iridescence of next morning's dawn found three vessels comprising the fleet which had sailed from Manila, cruising off the lee shore of the island, in search of an anchorage. One was found some few miles upshore from the bungalow, and the boats containing the commanding officers of the battalions and the ships put off from the other craft to the *Arizona,* where a council was held.

There were no sleepy ones among the thousand men aboard. All were eager, tense, waiting for their commands. At the termination of the council, the *Valkyrie* took aboard the other companies which went to make up Major Fenpenny's battalion and steamed off towards the south shore of the island, while the *Samar,* with the remaining battalion under Colonel Hugh Chisholm, headed for the extreme north. Pursey Ochs accompanied the latter, and Hopworth Dreen went with the *Valkyrie,* each to act as guide for their respective battalions. The *Ari-*

zona anchored, and her marines and jackies disembarked, the marines under the command of Captain Llewellyn Wagner, U. S. M. C.; the sailors in charge of Lieutenant Severy Quinn, U. S. N., both detachments numbering together two hundred and seventy-five, and under the guidance of Schlauss Hyman.

Colonel Parr had accompanied Major Fenpenny's battalion, and it was he who had planned the mode of attack. Fenpenny and Chisholm, landing at the extreme north and south, were to form in long lines of skirmishers, and, if possible, to complete a three-quarters circle about the island, the lack of definite information concerning the island's circumference preventing any accurate prognostication as to whether this could be done. This would, at all events, give a spread of eight hundred armed men, surrounding part of the island, and steadily advancing toward the centre to prevent any attempted concealment on the part of the mercenaries.

Meanwhile the marines and jackies were to spread out in just such another skirmish line, with the exception of twenty, who were to go to make up a party bearing a flag of truce. Ensign Gilroy was to have charge of this patrol, and was to approach the bungalow.

The marines in their white tunics made a brave showing as they disembarked from the *Arizona* for the shore, the blue-bloused, brown-

legginged jackies looking sombre by contrast. They landed, the sun of early morning glittering on their bayonets, reflecting soberly from the black barrels of the sailors' carbines. They formed in skirmish lines and spread out along the white-sanded beach, while Ensign Gilroy and his twenty were left in the centre of it. Dorothy Gordon, with Lanier-Daingerfield by her side, watched them wistfully. She and Daingerfield had been transferred from the *Valkyrie* when that vessel sailed toward the south, a half-hour before, she for her personal safety and Lanier because it had been decided that his sphere of usefulness would be greater as adviser to Commander Colcourt.

"Attention!" "To the left, dress!" "Right about face, by twos!" "To the right, wheel—march!" and more of the same came indistinctly to those on the *Arizona* from shore. The peace patrol passed the skirmish lines, following the lead of Schlauss Hyman, and disappeared around the curve which concealed the path leading to the bungalow.

The doctor marched first, followed by Gilroy, a great piece of white bunting tied to his sword and held aloft. The sailors moved briskly toward the woodland path. At the climb Hyman halted, the black hulk of the wreck attracting his attention.

"It looks to me," he said, after he had lifted a pair of marine glasses to his eyes and stared

steadily at the dismantled hulk, "as though there were some people there. There's a man standing against the pilot house, and a number —two, three, four—lying face downward on the deck. Don't you think you'd better look into that, Mr. Gilroy?"

The young officer, elated by the trust his superiors had given him, was missing no opportunity. "I see them," he said. "No! I don't need the binoculars! Surest thing you know! Here, Martin!"

His command had been halted when Hyman spoke, and now stood grounding arms. The sailor addressed, stepped forward and saluted.

"Martin, you're the best swimmer aboard the *Arizona*. Here's a chance to prove your nerve. Strip quickly and swim out to the hulk. We'll keep our carbines trained on her. Shout out to the people aboard that we've got their range and if they shoot, we shoot! Then climb aboard and see what's doing. Come back immediately and report to me."

Before Gilroy had said more than the first few words the sailor, Martin, had begun to strip, and within a space of two minutes his clothes were in a heap on the sand, and he had saluted and plunged into the water. His bronzed body shone as he lifted himself out of the water with his powerful strokes, and he shot toward the hulk like a veritable merman. Six of his companions, in response to Gilroy's order,

were on one knee, their carbines trained on the hulk. The wind brought Martin's challenge to them faintly, but no answer, and the next moment they saw his naked body dragged upward and aboard the hulk. The sun glistened on his wet skin as he moved to and fro on the deck, for the moment lost to view when he knelt to examine the bodies. His stay aboard was brief, and they saw him dive from the deck in a graceful curve, launched toward them. He swam easily and powerfully to the shore, shook himself and wiped the water out of his eyes, then saluted Ensign Gilroy.

"There are four dead men aboard and one man mighty badly wounded, sir," he said. "The man standing against the pilot-house fell backwards, shot through the head. He's just stiff. There's three more dead, one's got his windpipe cut clean through, another's been stabbed through the lungs, and the third's been battered over the head with something, skull's crushed in. And the fellow who looks like he done it all's cut up pretty bad, got about forty-eleven cuts, all over blood, two shots in him, and a baste on the head, too. There's a piece of a sword lying near him where he fell and a bunch of cartridges spilled over the deck. Must have been a hell of a scrap, begging your pardon, Mr. Gilroy."

Schlauss Hyman stepped forward, impetuous-

ly. "What sort of a looking man was the last one?" he asked.

"Kind of good-looking, I guess; sort of thin-featured, 'cept for his nose, and that sticks up a little. Got eyelashes like a woman, long and——"

Hyman gave an excited cry. "Mr. Gilroy, that—I am afraid that's Brent!" he cried. "Brent, you know; John Bauldwin Brent."

"Gee!" said Martin, with something of awe. It was a name not unknown in barracks and forecastles, that of the adventurer.

"Brent, eh?" said Gilroy. "Well now, by all that's holy, we've got to get him off. Martin, put on some of your things and hustle back to the *Arizona*. Tell 'em to send off a boat and fetch Mr. Brent and you go with the boat. Hurry, man!"

"Yes, sir," replied Martin, saluting again, pulling on his underwear. He followed this with his pants and shoes, and catching up the remainder of his gear fled hurriedly toward the *Arizona*.

Gilroy gave his commands again, and the party set off up the hill toward the bungalow. It was a house of silence. After having made a reconnaisance of the grounds without molestation or apparent observation, they entered the house single file, and Gilroy crammed the white flag into his hip pocket.

"No use," he said, briefly. "The beggars are probably asleep and we don't need it."

He stationed ten of the men below, and the others followed him up the stairs, each with directions to enter the different sleeping-rooms. What they had seen below amply justified them in believing that the people of the bungalow had no thought of their early coming. The floors of both living-room and dining-room were littered with beer-bottles, the tables were stacked with bottles nearly drained, containing whiskey, liqueurs, champagne. The glasses stank of stale liquor. The floor was filthy with bits of ill-smelling food, in the process of being devoured by ants and other insects. The kitchen revealed an array of pans and pots, greasy and unclean. The whole establishment was one to sicken the heart of a decent housekeeper; the chairs scratched and muddy, where feet had rested; the walls marked with the imprints of dirty hands, and scrawled over with lewd verses. Some of the furniture was broken and lay in a corner, along with a tablecloth and a quantity of napkins, very dirty. Cigar and cigarette butts reposed in coffee cups, and lay strewn on the floor along with paper spills and burnt-out matches. It was plain that the crew had been making of their adversity a Bacchanalian revel.

In the room which Gilroy entered, "Walrus" Arundsen lay, his pajamas unbuttoned. His mouth was wide open, exhaling a smell of in-

toxicants. Gilroy awakened him rudely with several thumps on his bare chest, and the "Walrus" started up with a roar of rage. On being pushed gently back, he groaned and felt his aching head, blinking his sleep-heavy eyes at the young naval officer. The sight of the United States uniform brought realization to his sodden brain, but inaction was compelled by the cold muzzle of a navy revolver under his ear.

"Do you surrender?" asked Gilroy, calmly.

The "Walrus" eyed him with animosity and grunted: "Do I surrender, is it? Vot—with that upon mine face—yah. Vat, am I a fool—or vot? Though in mine sleeping-clothes I have belief I not make satisfactory prisoner for my rank, young man. Time has been vhen you would salute an officer of the Danish navy—vich same I has been. Me, Rolf Arundsen."

He sighed deeply, and asked that Gilroy turn his back while he dressed, as he was a modest man of retiring disposition.

"No fear!" laughed Gilroy. "Not a chance. Slip into your togs and be quick about it, Captain Arundsen."

Gilroy assisted him, finding some underwear, socks and canvas shoes, and helped him into a clean white drill uniform; then, refusing his parole, he marched him at revolver point out of the room and into the hall, where were already assembled Colonel Pfferkorn, Phillips

and Sturm Sturmson. Later, one by one, the different officers of Pfferkorn's staff, save the four who slept at the barracks, joined the array and were put in charge of ten of the detachment.

The men suffered capture without a struggle. They had no ammunition, and knew that under the law of nations it would be a hard thing to find them guilty. So they accepted their fate with equanimity, having, in fact, far more solicitude for their aching brows than for their anomalous situation.

Colonel Pfferkorn was in rather a bad way from his wound received at the hands of Brent, and was suffering from much loss of blood. Schlauss Hyman, ever eager in his profession, wanted to examine the wound, but Gilroy forbade it until they had returned to the ship.

"We've got to take a look at the barracks," he said.

But the two men whom he had posted as flankers outside ventured to suggest the unwisdom of such a course. One of them had already crept near the barracks and reported that the whole forest was alive with the soldiers of Pfferkorn; that they were armed with heavy clubs and were prepared to make a sturdy defense. Gilroy considered the matter, and decided that as he had bagged the important prisoners he would return to the ship.

"I say, old man," "Prince Bertie" Phillips,

haggard, but as ever well-groomed, addressed Gilroy, "there are some beggars out there on that hulk in the harbor that may be in a rather bad way. One of your own people, the bally American, Brent, gave the lot of us a tough fight and smashed our one boat with a steering wheel. I don't know whether he's dead or not, but he went sheer, stark, raving mad. On my word, simply terrifying! Now, if you'd send a boat——"

But one had already been sent. Martin, eager to distinguish himself by the carriage of the important news, waived waiting for a boat to take him back to the *Arizona* and swam out to her in his underclothes, with the rest of his gear on his head. After climbing aboard he had breathlessly addressed the officer on deck with his tidings. Dorothy Gordon, turning, heard and turned a white face to the lieutenant.

"Mr. Harding!" she cried. "Oh, Mr. Harding, please—quickly. Yes, I know that is Mr. Brent from the description—quickly!"

Lanier-Daingerfield had watched her, a frown on his face, which deepened into a scowl. Standing aloof, he smoked cigarettes with short, quick puffs, lighting one on another.

Harding hurried off to speak to Lieutenant-Commander Colcourt, and within a very short time a boat was lowered. Dorothy caught Harding's arm.

"Let me go!" she cried. "Please!"

"Sorry, Miss Gordon," replied Harding, "but I—well, it's really impossible, you know. There!" and he breathed a sigh of relief as one of the ensigns dropped into the boat and it was shoved off. "You see it's too late now, anyway."

The girl turned an agonized glance on Harding. "What else did the man say?—did he say Mr. Brent was alive?"

"Yes," replied the embarrassed young officer, trying to speak in a soothing tone. "He's alive —and—yes, he's alive."

He excused himself on the grounds of some duties and hurried away. Dorothy, her hands clenched, leaned heavily on the rail, watching the gleam of the sun on the dripping oars as the boat drew nearer and nearer to the hulk.

It seemed that it would never return. She could only distinguish vaguely that they lifted something into the boat, then remained to adjust something more and pulled off. When they were some distance away someone pulled a lanyard and with a great roar and amid clouds of white smoke and sea-spume the hulk vanished from view. When the waves settled there was no sign of her. She had been torpedoed.

Slowly, draggingly, it seemed, the boat drew back from the hulk and approached the ship. Several sailors leaped on the accommodation ladder, and those in the boat passed them something wrapped in sailcloth, which the first two

bore tenderly up to the deck. The girl rushed to the side and encountered them.

"Is he alive? Tell me, is he alive?" she moaned.

They moved on, seemingly stolid, but inwardly perturbed. The young ensign doffed his cap to her.

"He's alive," he said, gently, "but the surgeon must see him at once, and—well—you understand."

He, too, made off with all haste. Dorothy hurried to the surgeon's office, Lanier-Daingerfield following and gnawing at his newly-grown mustache. The doctor was not in his office. He was attending to a dengue complainant in the sick-bay, the steward told her.

"Try to be calm, Dorothy," said Lanier-Daingerfield. "The doctor will——"

She did not hear him, only sank down, covering her face with her hands. She heard another boat rattling against the side, the one that contained the "peace patrol," and, drying her eyes, went on deck. The prisoners were the first to come aboard and were haled away by the sailors to Commander Colcourt's cabin. Ensign Gilroy followed, after dismissing the others of his men.

The girl caught Hyman's arm. "Doctor," she cried, "they've brought Brent aboard and he's wounded—and they—wo-won't l-let me see him!" The tears flowed, and she dabbed at her

eyes with her cambric handkerchief. "Doctor, Doctor, please, *please* save him! You can! I've heard so much of what you've done—and he was your friend. Save him—for my sake—because, Doctor, *can't* you understand?—and let me know—and let me be with him and tend him and nurse him—and, oh, Doctor, *go*—but let me know—and——"

Hyman quieted her with that rare sympathy which physicians sometimes have at crucial moments, and hurried below to find the man they had all grown to love. Dorothy waited, crouched down in a chair which had been brought on deck for her, while Lanier-Daingerfield stood off still smoking cigarettes and occasionally looking at her. He was swallowing hard.

After a time that seemed an age, Hyman came up and took the girl's hand. "Miss Dorothy," he said, "you must be brave. You must have faith. The ship's surgeon and myself will do all that can be done. For I promise you I will not leave him until I have pulled him through, or he is—well, you understand. If he does not live it will not be through fault of mine."

She stared at him with horror-stricken eyes. "But—you—know—whether——"

Hyman shook his head sadly. "I don't know, Miss Dorothy," he said, simply. "You must have faith. No, you can't see him now. No one can see him except me and the ship's surgeon. You must wait—and maybe—well, I

don't know about prayers—but there can't be any harm—and if ever a man needed prayers——"

He paused abruptly and went away without looking at her.

* * * * * * *

Meanwhile the campaign on shore had begun. Fenpenny's battalion and Chisholm's were slowly drawing a drag-net through the forests and jungle through which no man could pass. Early in the morning Chisholm's first company ambushed a detachment of fifty of the janissaries and ordered them to lay down their arms. As but twelve of the company's men were visible, the derelicts showed fight and charged with their clubs. They were almost immediately annihilated.

Both battalions encountered many more detachments, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller. Some gave signs of fight and paid their folly's penalty; others submitted, and marched on with the attackers, deprived of their clubs, their hands tied with their own tunics. Sometimes they were in little groups of twos and threes and showed the white feather, groveling before the conquerors.

At noon Fenpenny's battalion reached the barracks with their prisoners. Before two o'clock Chisholm had made a junction with him, and they sent forward a white flag to the bar-

racks, bidding the hundred ensconced behind the walls of the first building to surrender.

But the mercenaries, suspicious and afraid, refused, and there was nothing to do but train the brass rapid-firing guns upon them. These had been lugged from the *Valkyrie* for just this purpose, and they tore great holes in the building, threatening its thorough annihilation. The defenders, alarmed, called for a truce and came out to surrender.

The campaign was over—almost a bloodless one for the American troops. They had lost but two men and had only six wounded. The enemy's casualties had not been counted; they probably numbered one hundred. Of wounded they had twenty, and these were taken to the *Arizona* to be cared for.

The prisoners were confined in the second barracks, which had been unharmed, and some of the first battalion took up their quarters there also, others of them bunking in the ruined barracks. The officers appropriated the bungalow. The second battalion camped on the beach.

The work was over for the day. The night was to bring the council of war which was to decide the fate of the prisoners.

The *Samar* and the *Valkyrie* had returned before the campaign was over, and were anchored on either side of the *Arizona*. All the officers dined aboard the ships that night, but it was decided to hold the council in the living-room of

the bungalow, and to this end the Chinese stewards of the *Arizona* were sent to sweep up and garnish the place.

At eight o'clock all was in readiness and the boats put from the ships to the shore, containing the senior officers of the ships and the regiments, including the captain of the transport, Lanier-Daingerfield, Ochs, Hyman and Dreen.

The consultation was a long one, marked with many speeches from many persons, but the decision reached was practically unanimous, for there had been little divergence of opinion.

It was that Colonel Parr should remain on the island with his two battalions, and the *Samar* should lie at anchor with the *Arizona* to guard it, should the second ship come from Japan, and, if necessary, give battle to the ship. All that they had been able to wring from Arundsen was what he had told the others—that the *Dragon,* armored like the *Valkyrie,* and under command of the blackguard adventurer, Thorwald, was daily expected. Thorwald had an unenviable reputation in everything but fighting, but in that he was acknowledged the peer of any naval officer. Few had forgotten how he fought his ship when he served as a captain in the Japanese Navy, engaging and defeating two Chinese cruisers.

The *Valkyrie* meanwhile was to proceed to Manila with the reports of Commander Colcourt and Colonel Parr, conveying the official

prisoners for trial at Manila, and to ask that another cruiser be sent. She was to sail at dawn.

And it was at dawn next morning that they conveyed the senseless body of Brent aboard the *Valkyrie* before they awakened Dorothy Gordon. It was Lanier-Daingerfield who called her later, when the *Valkyrie* was leaving the island behind in the morning mists, and it was then she caught sight of Schlauss Hyman. Very white-faced, she clung to his hand.

"Doctor Hyman," she said, slowly. He turned. There was no longer the girl Dorothy. The eyes that pleaded with him were those of a woman who had been through a living hell of suspense.

"He is conscious," said Hyman. "The worst is over. I have operated—I think—successfully. He keeps calling for you, and I suppose you may go."

He led the way down the saloon steps to the second officer's cabin, which had been given up to his patient. Lanier-Daingerfield followed her, although she did not know it. Hyman opened the door; presently he came out and bade her enter. She went in, leaving the door ajar, and Hyman continued on his way down the passage. Lanier-Daingerfield stepped to the door and listened.

The cabin was very dark. Only the grey-pink morning mist lighted it through a half-

shuttered porthole. The smell of anæsthetics was heavy in the air. In the far corner she could see something framed in white, a face that appeared grey in its pallor. One thin, wasted hand stretched out to her.

She dropped on her knees and carried the hand to her mouth.

"Brent! Brent!" Her voice seemed choked, her breath came in little gasps. "If you knew —you have suffered, I know, oh, God! I know, but I—I have suffered, too, sweetheart, ever since I saw your dear body brought aboard. I —and now—it tears my heart to see you there so pale, so weak—and—Brent, Brent, dear! never, never leave me again. Oh, God! I love you so, Brent dear, dear! There is nothing for me if you are dead!"

"Hush!" he choked out, almost inaudibly. "You have promised—the other. You must not —tell me. Although it is what I want to hear—although I would go through all this again—to hear it—you must not tell me. You must not tell me. You have promised—promised."

He turned his head away, coughing, his frame shaking in convulsions. In spite of his determination, a moan of pain escaped him, and he fainted away.

For a time the girl remained on her knees, his limp hand in hers. Then slowly, as if in a daze, she got up and looked down at him.

"Brent," she said, and felt his pulse—some-

how she knew he had fainted. She bent over him.

"I shall kiss your dear face just once again," she said, not knowing she was speaking aloud. "Just once, Brent, and then—then I will remember what you have taught me—you, weak and wounded as you were, taught me. I shall always love you, always, always, but I—shall never tell you so again—never have your arms about me, never kiss your lips again after this. I have promised *him*. He saved us—and kept his word. I shall try—to make him—happy, though God knows I would rather be dead. So, Brent, good-bye."

She bent over him and kissed his cold lips. Lanier-Daingerfield outside drew himself up stiffly, brushed his eyes with the back of his hand; then his attitude relaxed and he walked away with bowed head.

The girl came out very pale and erect. In answer to her bell-ring a steward appeared, and she told him to fetch Hyman.

"Mr. Brent has fainted," she said, holding herself straight somehow, but when the doctor passed within she sank down in a heap, and sobs shook her slender frame.

CHAPTER XXI

IN ERMITA

When the *Valkyrie* had discharged its errand she returned to the island, taking Lanier-Daingerfield with her. Brent had been conveyed to the hospital in Ermita, which was daily visited from that time on by Dorothy, Dreen and Ochs. Schlauss Hyman had been given one of the rooms there that he might keep better watch over his patient.

It was on the fourth day that Brent was pronounced out of danger, but he was forbidden to receive visitors for a full week. So it was that the three others killed time at the Hotel Oriente, awaiting the time when they could see their chief, and also the return of the *Valkyrie* from the island again. The privileges of the clubs were extended the men, and military society opened its arms to Miss Dorothy Gordon. But she declined invitations to balls, dinners and bridge parties, under the plea that her recent excitement had left her too weak for any enjoyment of social gaieties. She was trying to real-

ize the actuality of future life with a man she did not love. But she was very brave through it all, and tried to keep from her companions any sign of the mental stress in which she found herself—but she deceived Ochs not at all.

It was the newspaper-man who strolled into the breakfast-room early one morning to find seated at the table Lanier-Daingerfield in the process of consuming some fruit, eggs and coffee. He came forward, greeting him without any particular warmth, but with great eagerness.

"The *Valkyrie's* back, is she?" he said, and seated himself at the same table.

"Yes, she's back," answered Lanier, peeling another banana. "Got in last night after twelve. We've had some hot times since you left the island, Ochs."

"Thanks—none for me," replied the newspaper-man, waving his hand. "There was about all the Tophet I wanted in mine as it was. If things got any more torrid than they were when we were there, you could fry eggs in the atmosphere. But, give a chap a line. What was the particular brand of Hades ladled out recently—hey? Did the ragged ruffians take it in their head that all men were free and equal?"

"No fear," returned Lanier, "that bunch is mighty glad it's living. No, it wasn't that. You remember there was to be a second ship sent to the island under command of a man named

Thorwald? Well, it was sent, all right. And it came."

"Forgot that," remarked Ochs. "Big story there. Fire ahead."

"Well, this *Dragon* butted right into the *Arizona* around the bend. Now the *Arizona's* a first-class cruiser and the *Dragon* was only a converted cruiser like the *Valkyrie*. Old Colcourt demanded the *Dragon's* surrender, and got a shot from Thorwald spank into his engine-room. Well, that made the old man sore, and he opened fire and tore big holes in the *Dragon*. All of a sudden the whole shooting-match goes bing, ker-plunk, smash, red-fire and 'Remember-the-Maine.' One of Colcourt's shots fell in the *Dragon's* magazine. It rained wood and iron and pieces of dead men for half an hour. There wasn't a man saved. The *Arizona's* disabled, too, and lost about a dozen men. Thorwald smashed one of her gun-tops, and the engine-room's a sight. The *Valkyrie* reached here late last night for assistance—want men from the Cavite Navy Yard to patch the *Arizona* up. Also to report the end of all the trouble. By the way, Ochs, do you know what the Government's decided to do with those men on the island? Everybody's been wondering over there—and the men want to know themselves. Do you know?"

"Sure, I know," returned Pursey Ochs. "I've been attending a council every day for

the past week. The Governor, the Civil Commissioners and all the high-muck-a-mucks of the Army and Navy. The President of our dearly-beloved native land—Rah! rah! siss-boom and a tiger!—Jumping Jerusalem! but ain't I a patriotic swot? Well, anyhow, as I was about to say, He Who Sitteth In Washington has also been with us?''

''The President—what?'' demanded Lanier. ''You're crazy. The President here in Manila?''

''In person, my dear boy, he is not. In spirit he has been here. We've been eating up about a thousand dollars a day in cables corresponding with the gentleman. And last night the bunch decided on a good scheme and got his approval, by courtesy of the Bennett-Mackay loop-the-loop. He says we're smoking the right dope, and he approves the play, subject to the grace of the Lord and the graft of the Senate.''

''Well, what's the idea?''

''The idea, my irrepressible Kafoozleum, is to make a lot of happy little workers out of our friends on the island. They will be farmers, the noblest work of God, as Josh Billings says somewhere. They will rise early in the morning, melt a pound of candles and grease their boots. Then they will wait patiently for dawn to break and when she does break they will go out and worry the geese and stir up the hogs.

For, as the gentleman says, too much sleep is ruinous to geese and to hogs."

Lanier laughed. "Oh, come off, Ochs! What're you driving at?"

"I'm putting it so your mind can grasp it, my boy. Sweetening the bitter pill of wisdom with a little cribbed humor. It's all to the mustard, though. They're going to make a sort of Botany Bay out of the island—penal settlement; new Caledonia. Are you on? The *Valkyrie* is going to be sold, agricultural implements bought and shipped to the island and a guard maintained there to see that nobody escapes. Great scheme, eh? Arundsen, Phillips, Sturmson, Pfferkorn, Janssen, and all the officers are going to be shipped back as overseers. The engineers got off, thanks to your evidence; so did Christian. And you got off, thanks to having turned State's evidence and lied pretty damn well."

Lanier flushed. "Look here, Ochs——"

The newspaper-man continued, not noting the interruption: "Brent and all the rest of us got cablegrams from the Heap Big White Chief in D. C. thanking us for our good work. There's one for you, too. They say as patriots we collar the Roquefort. But now, look here, Henry Lanier-Daingerfield, I've got a few short and pithy remarks to make to you, my boy."

Ochs' tone was grave. Lanier turned, watch-

ing him, the motion of his head an invitation to proceed.

"Well, it's about Miss Gordon. I know all about that business between you and her and Brent. See?"

"I don't see that it's any of your business, Ochs."

"Well, it *is* my business, for two reasons. Miss Gordon's my friend, and so is Bauldwin Brent—the best friends I've got. And I'm not going to see them go through life miserable because you choose to act like a selfish hound-pup. Dorothy is *not* in love with you, and she *is* in love with Brent, and the poor little kid's so miserable she can hardly hold her head up. And Brent doesn't seem to care whether he gets well or kicks the bucket. Now that's bad business, Lanier, and I put it to you straight—straight, mind you! The girl's promised you; sworn to you, I believe. She won't break her promise—her oath. She'll marry you if you insist—but I tell you, Lanier, it's a mighty shabby thing to do, old man."

Lanier sat quite silent, looking away from him. Ochs arose from the table and laid an envelope beside Lanier's plate.

"There's your cable from Washington. The kid and I are going to the hospital in about an hour. See if you can't do the square thing, Daingerfield."

Lanier's food got cold before him. It looked

as though everyone were against him. He had won Dorothy, carried out his own promise, and now—now they seemed to think he should forego his reward. His reward! But the worst of it all was that his conscience had joined the chorus of opposition. It was telling him that he was wrong, recalling to him the scene when Dorothy saw Brent's body brought aboard, when she spoke to him in the cabin.

He clapped his hands sharply, pushed his food away, and as the *muchacho* came in answer to his summons, ordered whiskey. Lighting a cigarette he tore open the cable envelope. As his eyes fell upon the writing within he bent over, his hands trembling. The blue slip fluttered to the table. The cigarette burned itself away unnoticed between his fingers.

Presently he picked up the slip and mumbled its contents aloud, as though believing his ears would not deceive him if his eyes had done so:

Daingerfield,
Hotel Oriente, Manila.

President recommends, view recent excellent service rendered, stain past misconduct removed your record. Your name replaced active list navy—lieutenant first grade. Report Commandant Cavite Naval Station.

It was signed with the name of the Secretary of the Navy Department.

The cigarette burning his fingers recalled him. He couldn't take it. He had not rendered his *country* a service; he had rendered it to Dorothy. He was to receive his reward from Dorothy. He was being acclaimed for something he had done from selfish motives.

Somehow he had never ceased to be a man of gentle breeding, this Lanier. And now the qualms of undeserved praise came to him. It was indeed the heaping of hot coals. He could not accept this reward.

The next second his face had gone ashen gray. Why not? Ochs had told him how Brent and Dorothy loved one another. It became suddenly visualized as true. What chance of happiness with a wife he had taken from the man she loved? Was that love that he should make her miserable all the days of her life? And Brent—what a decent chap he was!

He arose, very soberly, and signed the chit. The sudden sense of his unfitness came to him. His love for Dorothy became a thing sacred—apart from his own personality. His love were better proven by making her happy, by taking the chance afforded him by his country to make up for what he had done against her. He could always love Dorothy—maybe it would keep him straight. For he would know that she would cherish tender memories of the man who cared enough for her happiness to give it to her at his own expense.

In the writing-room he scribbled a note. On his way to the street he handed the envelope to the nearest *muchacho.*

"Señorita Gordon," he said.

The *cochero* who hailed him outside inquired as to the address to which he might desire transportation.

"Hospital Ermita," he answered, slowly.

So went Lanier-Daingerfield to face renunciation—a man chastened by fire. So we last see him, a lovable enough fellow, and pity him for his weaknesses; and, for all that know, what he did that morning wiped out the memory of many transgressions.

* * * * * * *

It was an hour or more later that Dorothy saw Brent for the first time since she had parted with him in the cabin of the *Valkyrie.* She was in white duck, little white shoes peeping out from masses of tucks and laces. Her blonde hair exhaled the perfume of Parma violets and her face was flushed with pink about the cheeks and ears. Nor was any May morning breeze gentler, more redolent of sweetness, tenderer than her voice. And as she came toward the gaunt figure in the chair by the window her eyes were like twin stars.

"Sweetheart!" she said.

He had turned, and in his eyes there was a joyous something that seemed to join the sunlight in making the room beautiful. He was

thin, pale, emaciated, his face scarred, his hair tinged with gray, and heavy lines were about his mouth and between his brows. But for all that the face was a goodly one to see, so irradiated was it with the joy of the moment.

"Lanier—has—been here," he said, half-doubtingly. "He has— Dorothy! you know?"

"Yes," she whispered. "He wrote me this!"

She held up a crumpled note, kissed it reverently, and then her arms went about Brent's neck, and her warm, fresh young body quivered against his.

"You see," she sobbed, "your dream—it's come true, dear. The birds, the flowers—and nothing between us, dear!"

"The same beautiful dream," he said; and the gladness of springtime was in his voice. "The same beautiful dream, dear! But—I shan't wake up this time—I shan't wake up!"

By the window a bird sang as though he would burst his little throat in outpouring the joyous melody within him.

THE END

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